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# THE
# INDWELLING GOD

# THE INDWELLING GOD

*A Historical Study of the Christian Conception of Divine Immanence and Incarnation, with Special Reference to Indian Thought*

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Princeton Theological Seminary Library

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OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

1938

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TO

MY WIFE

IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION
OF MANY DISCERNING CRITICISMS
AND MUCH TIMELY ENCOURAGEMENT

# PREFACE

THE studies which led to the writing of these pages were begun some fifteen years ago, with a view to the preparation of a small book which would compare the Hindu and Christian conceptions of the indwelling of God in Nature and in Man.

The subject had aroused my interest specially since I began to reside and work in India; because I then came to realize how much larger a place the idea of the Indwelling God occupies in the tradition of India than it does in the tradition of Western Christendom.

In my own experience, from boyhood upwards, the thought of God as Indweller had been by no means one of the central pillars of the Christian Faith. I had been taught that Christ is present in the Sacraments, and that the Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of saintly souls. But wider conceptions of God as the Indweller in Nature and History at large had been associated with poets rather than with preachers, and were rarely presented as an essential part of the Christian Revelation.

Even a slight contact with Hindu friends in India, however, made it evident to me that for the religiously-minded among them, the thought of God as Indweller was far more fundamental than it had been for myself, and was indeed an axiom so self-evident that it scarcely needed reasoning to support it.

At the same time, the Christian Church in India seemed generally to be content in this matter simply to accept the tradition of the West; and the proclamation of God as Indweller appeared to receive no greater emphasis in the Christian pulpits and schools of India than in those of Europe or America.

The question then arose whether this situation is one which the Christian in India should accept and endorse, or one which calls for reconsideration, and perhaps for a shifting of emphasis in Christian teaching? Does this divergence which at present separates Hindu from Christian ideas on this subject really correspond with a fundamental divergence between the essential teachings of Hinduism and of Christianity? If so, then the present

situation is substantially justified. On the other hand, if it should appear that the conception of Divine Indwelling holds a larger place in the Gospel of Christ than it holds in the average Christian teaching of today, then there would be need for a readjustment of the proportions of that teaching, along lines which might bring about a closer understanding between the Christian Church and the fundamental traditions and convictions of the Indian people.

It was with such considerations in mind that the studies underlying the following pages were commenced. As these proceeded, I found myself led to traverse wider fields than I had at first contemplated; and in its present form the book attempts to review in outline the general historical preparation for the Christian doctrine of Divine Indwelling, and its development through the centuries, side by side with a brief survey of Hindu and Islamic traditions on the same subject. In the closing chapters, I have tried to indicate my own main conclusions.

The specifically Indian sections of the study have thus come to occupy a smaller place in relation to the whole study than was at first planned. But I hope that as a result, the conclusions reached may be based on broader and more secure foundations, and that the special problems of India may receive illumination from a study of other fields of human thought and life.

This book has been written almost entirely in India, in spare moments or holidays, and in the midst of work which has involved constant travel and frequent interruptions that have tended to break the continuity of study. The final revision had to be carried out in a part of India where no theological reference library is available within several hundred miles.

It is never easy to keep the treatment of a subject of this kind completely abreast of the fresh books that are constantly being written on it; and in India especially, where a long lapse of time always seems to intervene, with oriental leisureliness, between the writing of a book and its publication, it is almost inevitable that a study such as this should be a little out-of-date before it actually apppears in book-form.

Difficulties such as these may in part explain, and perhaps to some extent excuse, the many imperfections that will become

apparent to the reader. I only hope that these may be in some measure compensated for by the fact that the study of this great subject has been made in a land where the issues raised are not merely academic but vital, and are presented to the Christian Church as a challenge by the great indigenous tradition of Hinduism.

The pages which follow were submitted to the University of Cambridge in 1936 as a thesis for the Degree of Bachelor of Divinity, and were approved for this by the Faculty of Divinity.

So many friends have helped me in the writing of these pages, that I can only select a few for special mention. The first suggestion that I should take up this line of study came to me from Dr A. J. Appasamy, himself a pioneer in the task of exploring the Indian interpretation of Christianity; and during the early stages of my work, his counsel and guidance were invaluable. Among others who have kindly read parts of the book, and assisted me with criticisms and suggestions, I would mention Sir S. Radhakrishnan, Dr M. H. Harrison of the United Theological College, Bangalore, the Rev. J. N. Rawson of Serampore College, the Rev. C. S. Milford of St. Paul's College, Calcutta, and several of my colleagues on the staff of St. Andrew's College, Gorakhpur. Most of all I am indebted to Mr H. H. Crabtree of St. Paul's College, Calcutta, whose thorough and careful criticism of the whole thesis has enabled me to remove many blemishes and to add many improvements. Without his help, and the help of many others—and not least, of the one to whom this volume is dedicated—I doubt if it would ever have reached the light of publication.

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*India*
*April 1938*

E. C. DEWICK

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| FARQUHAR, *M.R.M.I.* | ... | J. N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, New York, 1918. |
| FARQUHAR, *O.R.L.I.* | ... | J. N. Farquhar, *Outline of the Religious Literature of India*, Oxford, 1920. |
| HASTINGS' *D.B.* | ... | *A Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by J. Hastings, 4 vols., Edinburgh, 1898–1902. (Extra vol., 1904.) |
| HASTINGS' *D.C.G.* | ... | *A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, edited by J. Hastings, 2 vols., Edinburgh, 1906–1908. |
| HASTINGS' *E.R.E.* | ... | *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by J. Hastings, 12 vols., Edinburgh, 1908–1921. |
| MOFFATT ... | ... | *A New Translation of the Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments*, by J. Moffatt, London (undated). |
| *S.B.E.* ... | ... | *Sacred Books of the East Series*, edited by Max Müller, Oxford (various dates). |

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTORY

THE indwelling of God in the world and in man is a subject so vast that at the outset it overwhelms us with feelings akin to those which came upon Job as he contemplated the Divine transcendence: 'God is in Heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few.' Yet sometimes a vast subject proves so fascinating, and withal so relevant to human needs, that it seems to invite some attempt to study and describe it; not (as St. Augustine once wrote) 'because one wants to talk, but because one cannot keep silence.'[1] It is only some such conviction as this that can justify an attempt to deal with so large a theme; and if anything is to be said usefully on the subject, it is important first of all to define clearly the meaning of some of the terms which will be constantly in use during our study, and to note some of their implications.

We may begin by taking the term 'Divine indwelling', and asking what this signifies, and how it can best be imagined and described.

### *Various Modes of Indwelling*

Processes of indwelling are familiar to us in everyday life, and we are acquainted with them in various forms.

The simplest type is the indwelling of matter within matter. One common example of this is when a small, solid body indwells a larger; a kernel, for instance, within a fruit or a nut. Another example is when a substance is pervaded by something less solid than itself, which appears to our senses to be both contained within the substance, and at the same time distinguishable from it. Thus, salt held in solution in water may be said in this sense to 'indwell' the water; and fire in hot metal may be regarded (at least by the unscientific) as 'indwelling' the metal.

[1] 'Non ut diceretur, sed ne taceretur.' (*De Trinitate*, V, IX, 10.

Besides these material types of indwelling, we are also acquainted with the indwelling of that which is non-material in that which is material. In the case of certain material objects, we find indications that, associated with them or dwelling in them, there is something which cannot be fully appraised by our senses, or by the methods of scientific measurement or analysis. This we generally describe by such terms as 'life', 'soul', 'spirit', etc.; terms which, whatever their distinctive meanings, all have this in common, that they indicate something different from matter.

Of these non-material indwellings, the one which is known to us most intimately is the indwelling of the human soul or spirit in its body. In this type of indwelling we find certain characteristics which, while seen in a rudimentary manner in the lower forms of life, become fully apparent only at the human level. The characteristics of this indwelling are known to us from our own experience.—(1) It is a personal indwelling: i.e., there is a self-conscious centre within the body, which under normal conditions cannot dissociate itself altogether from its material body. (2) At the same time, it is not a purely voluntary indwelling; for our human soul did not choose to come and dwell in its body; nor can it leave the body at will, except by an act of suicide, which breaks its normal contact with the world of our experience. (3) It is a continuous, not an intermittent, type of indwelling, and in this respect is unlike the temporary 'possession' of a body by a spirit; for our soul cannot come and go and come again to its own body, at will. (4) While it is an all-pervasive indwelling, it is not equally pervasive throughout its body. It is all-pervasive; for we say of one who has touched any part of our body: 'He has touched *me*.' But not every part of the body is equally pervaded; for the soul dwells far more intensely in the brain than in the hands or feet, so that we speak of the former as one of the 'vital spots' in our body. (5) While body and soul are thus so intimately associated together that normally we only know each of them through the other,[1] the non-material indwelling

[1] This is not intended to question the immortality of the soul, nor the kind of survival which psychical research claims to support; but in the present state of our knowledge, neither of these come within the scope of our *normal* experience.

element tends, especially in its higher manifestations, to pass beyond material limitations; and while still retaining its centre of consciousness within its body, it can exert its influence over wide realms, becoming more and more independent of the limitations of time and space.

Now since this indwelling of the human soul in its body is, of all types of indwelling, the most intimately known to us, and is also generally recognized as the highest type with which we are acquainted, it would seem natural that when we seek to conceive of the indwelling of God, we should build our thought along the lines thereby suggested; though we must ever bear in mind that the human is at most only a feeble adumbration of the Divine. But if we follow this line of thought, we shall be led to conceive of Divine indwelling as the activity of a person, rather than as the state of a thing; as a process continuous, rather than intermittent; as all-pervading, and yet admitting of various degrees of intensity at different points. These are not, indeed, assumptions that will be accepted universally. There are philosophers who prefer to think of God as impersonal or 'super-personal' rather than as personal, and who would consequently demur to any idea of a personal Divine indwelling. There are others again who maintain that if God is personal no act can be properly called Divine unless it is the expression of a Divine act of will; and that consequently the Divine indwelling is fundamentally unlike the indwelling of our spirits in our bodies because the former must be conceived of as a continuous act of God's will, while the latter is not the direct result of any act of human will. But generally, the indwelling of the human spirit in its body is accepted as affording us the best available analogy of our conception of Divine indwelling, or at least a better analogy than any process on the purely material plane.

Yet even those who most strongly insist that the Divine indwelling is 'spiritual' find it difficult to avoid the use of analogies which are drawn from the sphere of physical processes, rather than of personal relationships. In the case of the Christian sacraments, for instance, the indwelling 'grace' is often described in terms which differentiate it from the personal presence of God; the latter being regarded (as in Newman's

well-known phrase) 'a higher gift than grace'. In that case, grace, while having the quality of sacredness or 'numinousness', is 'spiritual' only in the sense that an attenuated form of matter is spiritual, and does not necessarily denote the activity of a living person.

In this connexion, one question that will frequently confront us in our study is that of the legitimacy of material or spatial metaphors to describe the mode of the Divine indwelling. We shall find that even in the highest types of religion and philosophy, terms such as the 'subliminal', or the 'supernatural', with their suggestions of upper and lower levels, occur frequently. It is probably impossible, and perhaps undesirable, to attempt to dispense altogether with such terms; but it is important to realize that in the sphere of the personal and the spiritual they are not wholly adequate, and that in this sphere all descriptions based simply on spatial analogies leave us with something still unexplained, which escapes and transcends the categories of the material world, and which, even if it cannot be defined, may not be forgotten without endangering some of the higher values of life.

But the indwelling of spirit within its body is not the only type of spiritual indwelling of which we have knowledge. The relation of an artist to his work of art offers another fruitful analogy for our thought of the indwelling of God. We often say that an artist 'puts himself' into his picture or composition, so that his spirit is expressed through it, and lives in it. This mode of indwelling is different from that of a soul within its body. It is less essential, for it takes place only as a result of a definite act of will on the artist's part; and less personal, because his centre of consciousness does not reside within his work of art.[1] But religious souls have often recognized in this a reflection of the indwelling of God in His creation, and have rejoiced to speak of Him as the Great Artist whose spirit is manifested to some extent through the world that He has designed.

[1] Indeed, in the simpler forms of human creative activity, the element of spiritual indwelling in that which is created becomes so much less, that (as in the case of the potter and his clay) it is not the maker's immanence in his handiwork that impresses us, but his transcendent power over it. Similarly, it is quite possible to recognize Nature as God's handiwork, without any thought of His indwelling therein.

Another type of indwelling known to us is seen in the process of heredity, through which a human father and mother 'live again' in their children, in the sense that in the children the spirit and character of the parents is in a measure reproduced. In this case, while the centres of consciousness remain distinct, there is a real communion of spirit with spirit, which we may regard as a reflection of the spiritual indwelling of a Father-God in His children. In human life, this indwelling through heredity takes effect through the deeper subconscious instincts of man or the wider processes of nature, rather than through any specific act of will, consciously directed to produce the indwelling. This suggests the possibility that the Divine indwelling also may operate in fields in which we cannot trace signs of the voluntary agency of God.

There is yet another type of personal indwelling in human life, indicated by such terms as 'influence' or 'inspiration'. These describe processes still further removed from the material, processes by which something spiritual 'goes out' from one life and 'comes to dwell' in another. This again does not involve any transference of the seat of consciousness into the person indwelt, and to this extent it is sub-personal. It is also generally less permanent than the indwelling of a soul in its own body. On the other hand, in so far as such influence is deliberate, it is bestowed, withdrawn, and renewed at the will of the donor, and its effects may also be modified by the will of the recipient; so that, to this extent, it is personal. At its highest levels, this spiritual influence (as seen in the union of two human souls in love or friendship) shows us an example of the interpenetration or mutual indwelling of two personalities who still retain their own distinctness. Such indwelling transcends space and time, as well as human speech and thought; and it may be that in these deeper experiences of the human spirit we are led nearest to an apprehension of the method of the indwelling of God.

This brief survey of the various types of indwelling known to us in our human experience may serve to warn us that in our study of the indwelling of God we should not confine ourselves to a single line of thought, or a single type of illustration, as though this would suffice to give us an adequate

conception. Our conception must be large and complex; and we shall need to use many ways of approach towards it.

Christians, and all those who think of God as our Father, will seek to picture His indwelling in terms of spirit and personality, rather than of material substance. But a personal indweller may adopt various modes of indwelling, according to the nature of that which is indwelt. For instance, while we may conceive of God as immanent both in the material world and also in the human spirit, we shall need to adopt different categories and illustrations to describe these two types of Divine indwelling. For the purpose of conceiving the indwelling of God in the world, we may use the analogy of our own experience of the soul within our material bodies, supplementing this with the thought of the artist 'putting himself' into his work of art. When we are describing the indwelling of God in human souls, we may use partly the categories of influence, inspiration and friendship, as well as the analogy of heredity. We shall have further to consider the relation of the Divine indwelling to human free-will and the autonomy of man's personality, and in particular to that strange 'will to do evil' that is found in its most highly-developed form in human nature. Both in the human and in the cosmic spheres, we shall have to ask ourselves whether the Divine indwelling is to be conceived of as continuous and 'essential', or as intermittent and due to recurring acts of the Divine will. These are some of the large problems that will confront us in the course of our survey of the subject.

*Indwelling, Immanence and Incarnation*

In connexion with the conception of Divine indwelling, certain terms are frequently used which require careful definition, to avoid confusion of thought.

The term 'immanence' ('remaining-in') is generally used of the indwelling of God in the universe at large, rather than of the indwelling of God in human souls, or of the indwelling of human souls in their bodies. It also usually denotes a permanent and essential indwelling, which is of the very nature of God, rather than a temporary indwelling, due to a specific act of the Divine will. It is often used by those who hesitate to ascribe

personality to God, but who believe that in the material world there are signs of 'something beyond that is also within'.[1]

On the other hand, the term 'incarnation' ('entering-into-flesh') is generally used to describe a personal indwelling of God in an animate body, by a special act of the Divine will.[2] It denotes an indwelling more permanent than 'possession' (which lasts only during part of the lifetime of the being that is possessed), but less permanent or essential than immanence. The process of incarnation is generally regarded as supernatural, and is contrasted with the normal relation between God and the world at large.

In orthodox Christian theology, the term is used only of the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, and this is regarded as the only *real* Divine incarnation that has ever occurred.[3] But this has not always been a recognized limitation of its significance.

Two other terms to which we have already referred, 'inspiration' (breathing-into) and 'influence' (flowing-into) have also acquired somewhat specialized significance. 'Inspiration' (at least in theological treatises) generally denotes 'the special action upon a person of the Spirit of God';[4] while 'influence'

[1] Cf. the following definitions of immanence:

(1) 'The word "immanence" is used in modern theology to denote the presence or indwelling of God in the world' (Hastings' *E.R.E.*, Vol. VII, p. 167a, Art. 'Immanence').

(2) In *The Oxford English Dictionary*, the definition given of 'immanent' is as follows: 'Indwelling, inherent, actually present or abiding in; remaining within. . . . In recent philosophy, applied to the Deity regarded as permanently pervading and sustaining the universe, as distinguished from the notion of an external transcendent creator or ruler.'

The term 'immanence' is rarely found in early English literature; but it occurs in S. T. Coleridge, and becomes frequent in the latter part of the nineteenth century (F. Platt, *Immanence in Christian Thought*, London, 1915, p. 77).

[2] 'The term "incarnation" is applied to the act of a divine or supernatural being in assuming the form of a man or animal, and continuing to live in that form upon the earth' (Hastings' *E.R.E.*, Vol. VII, p. 183a, Art. 'Incarnation').

[3] Some recent theologians have gone further, and maintain that the term 'incarnation' of itself denotes a process essentially different from that of Divine indwelling as a whole. See below, Chap. xiii.

[4] W. Sanday, *Inspiration*, London, 1896, p. 226.

is a wider term, covering action that may be either human or divine, unconscious or conscious, evil or good.

*Immanence and Transcendence*

Immanence is often contrasted with transcendence, but in fact the two ideas are more complementary than contradictory. The term 'transcendence' denotes a 'going-beyond', or surpassing; so that when we say that God 'transcends' the universe, we mean that He is more than all the universe, and can never be completely known through it. And since this 'something more' is unknown and strange to us, we are led on to the further conception of transcendence as 'otherness'; so that transcendence may be used to denote 'God's apartness from or elevation above the world'.[1]

Now the idea of transcendence (whether as the 'something more', or as the 'otherness') not only permits, but requires, some element of immanence, if it is to come within our apprehension. For a God who is purely 'above' or 'other' must remain altogether outside our experience, unless He enters into it at some point, and in so doing becomes to that extent the Indweller, at least in our minds.

Conversely, the idea of immanence becomes intelligible only if it is blended with some element of transcendence; for otherwise there would be nothing to come into and dwell in the universe, since God would be regarded as already entirely within the universe, or identical with it.

So, generally speaking, the difference between the immanentist and transcendentalist types of theology is one of emphasis. The idea of Divine indwelling is not endangered by that of Divine transcendence, unless the latter is pushed to an extreme which entirely separates God from the universe in its normal working. Then, indeed, Divine indwelling does become inconceivable; but it is no less inconceivable (as we have already noticed) on the basis of an extreme Pantheism which identifies God with the universe.

It is perhaps hardly necessary to add that the idea of Divine indwelling in any form pre-supposes that God and the world

[1] So A. C. McGiffert, in Hastings' *E.R.E.*, Vol. VII, p. 167a.

are both realities; and it is therefore also inconceivable either on the basis of an Atheism which denies the real existence of God, or of an Acosmism which denies the real existence of the world.

With these preliminary considerations in mind, we may now turn to review some of the main phases of the historical development of the idea of Divine Indwelling.

# CHAPTER II

## THE BEGINNINGS OF THE IDEA

ALTHOUGH the idea of Divine immanence, in its fully developed philosophic form, belongs to an advanced stage of human thought, its roots may be found far back in primitive times. For from the very first, man found himself confronted with happenings that seemed to indicate that unseen forces were everywhere at work behind the scenes. Primitive man did not draw a sharp line between things spiritual and material, nor think of unvarying 'laws' of Nature. Alike in human conduct and in the world at large, he was constantly meeting with the unexpected and the apparently arbitrary; and he concluded that the whole world of Nature was alive, in much the same sense that he himself was alive.[1]

### A. PRIMITIVE IDEAS OF SOMETHING WITHIN NATURE

This sense of the 'aliveness' of the world was expressed in various ways.

*The immanence of Mana.* The term *Mana* (of Melanesian origin) has been adopted by many modern writers to describe the idea of an Unseen Force everywhere pervading or indwelling the world—an idea which is widespread among primitive peoples. *Mana* is conceived of as 'thin, fluid, ubiquitous';[2] in other words, as an elusive kind of matter. It is all around man, in the world; and also within him, giving him exceptional powers.[3] It would be perhaps an anachronism to describe *Mana* as 'spiritual', in the sense which this term acquired later; yet there is a close resemblance between this idea of an invisible quasi-material 'something' which indwells the things we see, and many later conceptions of Divine immanence in the world.

[1] See J. A. Macculloch in Hastings' *E.R.E.*, Vol. IX, p. 203a, Art. 'Nature'.

[2] B. Malinowski in *Science, Religion and Reality*, London, 1925, p. 27.

[3] See R. R. Marett, *The Threshold of Religion*, London, 1909, pp. 104, 111.

*The indwelling 'spirits' of Animism.* Besides the idea of *Mana*, we find evidence that primitive man often imagined that the world is peopled by innumerable 'souls' or 'spirits'. This belief is known as Animism or Animatism.[1] In this case, 'that which indwells' is not a single impersonal 'thing', such as *Mana*, pervading the world after the manner of a gas or fluid; but it is broken up into a number of invisible beings, which have at least 'the shadow of personality', and are free and even arbitrary in their actions.[2] These beings may possess or indwell a material body, either permanently or for a limited period of time. Such indwelling is slightly less material, and slightly more personal, than in the case of *Mana*, and thus it marks a further step towards higher religious and philosophic conceptions.

*The unseen forces of Magic.* In Magic, too, the whole atmosphere is conducive to the belief in unseen powers pervading the visible world, and there are some specific ideas which may have been the forerunners of later philosophic conceptions.[3]

*Nature-worship and Polytheism.* At a somewhat later stage we find man contemplating the great Nature-powers (Sun, Wind, Fire, etc.) in an attitude of awe and worship. Among these, or with them, are many demons and gods, greater in power and more separate from the earth than the 'spirits' of

[1] 'Animatism' is a term used to describe a rudimentary type of Animism, in which little or no distinction is made between (say) the stone itself and the spirit that inhabits it; but the stone itself is treated as alive. (See Marett, op. cit., p. 2.)

[2] 'The "soul" is a thin, unsubstantial human image, a sort of vapour, film, or shadow; ... capable of leaving the body, mostly impalpable or invisible, yet also manifesting physical power; . . . able to enter into, possess, and act in the bodies of other men, animals, or even things.' (E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. I, London, 1873, p. 429.) It is hardly possible at the primitive stage to differentiate clearly between 'souls' and 'spirits'; but later on, 'soul' came to be associated with a more permanent type of indwelling than 'spirit'.

[3] In 'Imitative Magic' particularly, which claims to be able to injure or protect a living being by means of acts done to its image, there is a suggestion of some kind of correspondence between a visible object and an 'unseen reality' corresponding to it; so that the latter might be said (in later philosophic terminology) to 'transcend' the former, and at the same time to be so closely associated with it that it almost 'indwells' it. See, e.g., Sir J. G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, one-vol. ed., London, 1923, pp. 11-37; or Tylor, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 496.

Animism; but, like them, occasionally coming to dwell in human or other material bodies.[1]

In suggesting that primitive ideas, such as those of *Mana*, Animism and Magic, may be connected with later conceptions of Divine immanence, we do not wish to imply that the development of thought has been along these lines only, or that it has been uniform in all parts of the world;[2] but only that there are indications, fragmentary but significant, of a continuity of thought that has run through the ages. Certain it is that primitive ideas survive with great tenacity in the human mind. Animistic fears of ghosts and spirits, and faith in the magical potency of mysterious ritual, are still found, even among those whose intellect has been trained to think in philosophic ways. Probably, indeed, few of us are entirely devoid of such feelings which, if there, link us with our primitive forefathers of prehistoric days.

## B. The Emergence of the Two Main Types of Higher Religious Thought: Monism and Monotheism

If we endeavour to trace the origins of the great religions of the world as far back as the evidence will carry us, we find that in most cases the background out of which they emerged into the light of history was largely polytheistic, sometimes blended with an element of Pantheism among the more reflective minds.[3]

Out of this general polytheistic background, two major types of higher religious thought seem to have developed, each of them motivated largely by the desire to find some unifying

[1] For Polytheism, see, e.g., Marett, op. cit., or A. E. Garvie's article 'Polytheism', in Hastings' *E.R.E.*, Vol. X, pp. 112 ff.

[2] Most modern writers hold that the early development of Religion was very complex, and cannot be traced to any single source, such as Animism or Nature-worship. See, e.g., Macculloch, in Hastings' *E.R.E.*, Vol. IX, p. 202, Art. 'Nature'.

[3] Brief summaries of the earliest known 'background' of religion in various parts of the world will be found, e.g., in C. Clemen's *The Religions of the World*, translated by A. K. Dallas, London, 1930. The polytheistic and pantheistic features are found blended in most cases, e.g., in Babylonia, Egypt, Persia, India, Greece, Rome and Northern Europe generally. In China and Japan, the historical process seems for the most part to have followed different lines.

principle behind the many phenomena of life. One of these, starting from the Pantheism which is always latent in Polytheism, seeks for the One within the many, and in its extreme forms either identifies the One with the many, or else refuses to apply to the One any limitations or definitions, till It becomes simply the unconditioned, That Which Is, and the phenomena of the world are denied any real existence at all. The 'immanentist' religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, and some types of Greek philosophy, belong to this type; and also other traditions less known to western scholars.[1]

The other type seems to have begun by singling out either some human hero, or else one of the many gods of polytheism, and then elevating this one far above all others, as a person indeed, but a superhuman person, who eventually comes to be worshipped as the one and only God. This God is exalted far above all earthly things, differing essentially from them, as Creator from His creation; He is the Almighty Sovereign (rather than the Indwelling Soul) of the Universe; essentially righteous and good, and therefore separate from evil. This type of thought has found expression in Judaism, Islam, and in the main tradition of Christianity. In its extreme form, it culminates in Deism or Dualism; in its more central type, it is known as Theism or Monotheism.

### C. The Reactions within the Two Main Types of Religion

As we trace the history of these two main types of religious thought, we shall notice that within each there have been periodic reactions against the general trend, as if in protest against the overlooking of some complementary truth.

Thus, within Islam (the most severely transcendentalist of all religions) we shall find the Sūfī movement, affirming, often with extravagance, the Divine indwelling in man; similarly in transcendentalist Judaism, we shall find the Alexandrian theology, with its distinctively immanentist note. On the other side,

[1] e.g., R. E. Hume in his *Treasure-House of the Living Religions*, New York, 1932, quotes a saying from the Taoist (Chinese) Scriptures: 'The Great Supreme is the All-Pervading' (Extract IV, 36).

within Hinduism and Buddhism, we shall observe a recurring tendency to affirm theistic principles, and to stress the note of moral Dualism, as against the idea of the all-inclusive One who is beyond good and evil.

Such counter-movements remind us once more that Transcendentalism and Immanentism stand in need of each other; and that neither can be forgotten without loss to truth as a whole.

We may turn now to study the idea of Divine indwelling in the tradition of Hinduism, which has its roots far back in the past, but which today forms the main background of thought in India, where these pages have been written.

# CHAPTER III

## THE HINDUISM OF THE VEDAS, THE UPANISHADS AND THE GĪTĀ

IN the preceding chapter, we noticed that out of primitive Animism and Polytheism developments of thought took place chiefly along two lines; the one dominated by the idea of Divine immanence, and leading towards Monism and Pantheism, the other by the thought of Divine transcendence, and culminating in Monotheism or Deism.

Of these, the former has been especially associated with India, and with the great and complex system of thought known as Hinduism. It is this which must now claim our attention; though in dealing with so vast and elusive a subject, the utmost we can hope to do in this brief study is to indicate those aspects of it which are specially related to the theme of Divine indwelling.

### A. THE BEGINNINGS OF HINDUISM: THE ṚIG-VEDA

*Its background of polytheistic Nature-worship.* From almost unknown origins, Indian thought emerges suddenly into the sphere of our knowledge in the hymns of the Ṛig-Veda, at some period not less than a thousand years before Christ, and perhaps a good deal earlier.[1]

[1] Various estimates of the dates of the early Ṛig-Vedic hymns have been put forward. A. Berriedale Keith places the extreme limits of date as 'between 1300 B.C. and 800 B.C.'—*Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, Cambridge, Mass., 1925, (Vol. XXXII in the Harvard Oriental Library), pp. 6, 7. H. D. Griswold's estimate is similar (*The Religion of the Ṛigveda*, Oxford, 1923, p. 74). A. A. Macdonell puts the earliest of them 'not later than the thirteenth century B.C.'—*Hymns from the Rigveda*, Calcutta, 1921, p. 7. S. Radhakrishnan assigns them to the fifteenth century B.C. (*Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, London, 1923, p. 67.) S. N. Dasgupta, after quoting various authorities who favour dates ranging from 2000 B.C. to 4000 B.C., declines to commit himself to more than the general statement that they 'have been handed down from a period of unknown antiquity'—*History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, Cambridge, 1922, p. 10.

The Ṛig-Vedic hymns express the beliefs of a pastoral people, whose ideas have risen above Animism to a Polytheism in which the gods are closely connected with the great powers of Nature—Sun, Wind, Dawn, Fire, etc. There is much here that reminds us of other ancient religions, particularly those of Babylon and Greece, at a similar stage of their development. But already some of the distinctive ideas of later Hinduism may be traced in embryo, and notably the idea of an essential Divine immanence in the whole world.

It is not that the Nature-gods are actually described as 'dwelling in' their respective elements. Rather, the Ṛig-Vedic Aryans would simply have said, 'Ushas *is* the dawn; Vata *is* the wind; Surya *is* the sun;' and so forth; identifying the gods with the powers of Nature, and hardly separating each god from his element sufficiently to describe him as 'dwelling in' it.[1] But as the conception of the god became higher, his relation to the Nature-force comes to be pictured in terms of indwelling.

*The beginnings of Hindu Philosophy in the Vedas.* While most of the Ṛig-Vedic hymns reflect a naïve and traditional Nature-worship, a few of them contain indications that already there were among the Aryans some restless minds who were seeking for a further object for their worship and thought, nobler even than the great forces of Nature. This led to developments in more than one direction.

*The abortive movement towards Monotheism.* In some of these hymns, for instance, one special god is singled out and elevated to a position above the others, so that all the worship is concentrated towards him, ignoring (though not, as in Monotheism, actually denying) all the others.[2] This type of religion is sometimes called 'Henotheism'; and had it continued and prevailed, it is possible that it might have come to be a stepping-stone to a true Monotheism, in which the lesser gods would eventually

[1] Similarly, in ordinary human life, we treat a man's body, its movements and actions, as the man himself, and do not stop to philosophize about the indwelling of his soul in his body.

[2] Indra and Varuṇa, in particular, are singled out in this way; and at times the language addressed to them seems definitely monotheistic, and 'brings back to one who knows it the lofty language of Hebrew seers and psalmists'. —N. Macnicol, *Indian Theism*, Oxford, 1915, p. 12.

have ceased to have any place, and the worship would have been entirely directed to One Transcendental God in heaven. But as a matter of fact, this did not happen. The gods of the Ṛig-Veda remained at the stage of 'arrested personification',[1] and the main trend of Indian thought turned in another direction in its search for the highest conception of God.

*The tendency to Monism.* Even in the Ṛig-Veda, we can trace here and there the beginnings of the great conception which was destined to become central in Hinduism: that God is the unseen, all-pervading Unity, indwelling the things that appear to our senses. Of this one Being, the many gods of polytheism are only aspects or names:

> They call Him 'Indra', 'Mitra', 'Varuṇa', 'Agni'; to what is One, sages give many a title.[2]

This One does not (like the one God of Judaism or Islam) stand above the world as a heavenly Monarch, with a clear moral character and decisive will, creating the world by command from afar, and thereafter governing it from above, while at the same time holding personal intercourse at will with human beings on this earth. Rather, It is a mysterious Something, underlying the world, and organically one with the world, because the world has emanated from It. The 'Creation-Hymn' of the Ṛig-Veda (X, 129), which Keith has styled 'the most important in the history of the philosophy of India',[3] gives an impressive picture of this mysterious One:

> Alone that One breathed calmly, self-supported;
> Other than It was none, or aught beside It.
> . . . . . .
> That which in void and emptiness lay hidden
> Alone by power of fervour [*tapas*] was developed.
> Then for the first time there arose desire [*Kāma*]
> Which was the primal germ of Mind, within it.
> And sages, searching in their hearts, discovered
> In Nothing the connecting bond of being.

[1] R. Bloomfield, *The Religion of the Veda*, New York, 1908, p. 85; cf. p. 200.

[2] *Ṛig-Veda*, I, 164, 46; from R. T. H. Griffith's translation, two vols., Benares, 1896—a convenient English version of the whole series of hymns in Books I–X.

[3] op. cit., p. 435.

Who is it knows? Who here can tell us surely
From what, and how, this Universe has risen,
And whether not till after it the gods lived;
Who then can know from what it has arisen?

The source from which this Universe has arisen
And whether it was made, or uncreated,
He only knows, who from the highest heaven
Rules, the all-seeing lord;—or does not He know?[1]

The language and conception of this poem are majestic; but the Being here contemplated is very different from the personal God of Monotheism.

*The note of Divine Transcendence.* The idea of transcendence is not entirely absent from the Ṛig-Veda; for at least in some of the later hymns the One is distinctly presented as *more* than the world of our senses; and under the titles of *Prajāpati* (Lord of Beings) and *Viśvakarma* (All-Creator), He is described as controlling all things from without:

Who by His might alone became the monarch
Of all that breathes, of all that wakes or slumbers,
Of all, both man and beast, the Lord Eternal;
Who fixed the firmament, the heaven of heavens;
Who measured out the air's extended spaces.[2]

Our father, our creator, maker,
Who every place doth know, and every creature.[3]

Such language belongs to a theistic, rather than a monistic, type of thought, and presents God as a person rather than as an impersonal substance.

Midway between this and a thorough-going Pantheism stands the conception set forth in the *Hymn to Puruṣa*:

Whatever is, is Puruṣa;
Both what has been and what shall be;
. . . . . .
As great as this is Puruṣa,
Yet greater still his greatness is;
All creatures are one-fourth of him;
Three-fourths th' immortal in the heaven.[4]

[1] From Arrowsmith's edition of Kaegi's *The Rig-Veda*, Boston, 1886, p. 90.
[2] Ṛig-Veda, X, 121; Kaegi, op. cit., p. 89.
[3] Ṛig-Veda, X, 82; Kaegi, op. cit. p. 89.
[4] Ṛig-Veda, X, 90; Griswold's translation, op. cit., p. 344.

Here, Puruṣa is more than the sum-total of creation; yet still he is not a personal Creator, but an impersonal larger Whole, of which the world is a part. This readily leads on to the idea of the essential organic unity between God and the world, which becomes central in the Hindu tradition.

*The process by which the world originated from the One.* The origin of the world is described in the later hymns of the Ṛig-Veda chiefly under three metaphors; sacrifice, birth, and warmth (*tapas*). All these suggest a close organic union between God and the world—much closer than is implied by the metaphor of 'creation'. The primitive idea of sacrifice seems to have been that the essence of the victim sacrificed is dissolved and scattered, and then comes to dwell in new forms. So in one of the hymns to Puruṣa we read that after he is sacrificed, the several parts of him become the several parts of the worlds—the Four Castes, the Sun, Moon, Sky, etc:

> Then they dismembered Puruṣa;
> . . . thus they framed the worlds.[1]

Similarly the metaphors of birth (generation, procreation, or emanation) which occur frequently in these hymns, as well as in later Hinduism), also imply a close organic union. God is the 'Golden Germ' (*Hiraṇyagarbha*) or 'World-egg', out of which all things have come forth.[2]

Again, the figure of *tapas* (originally denoting warmth, perhaps connected with the hatching of an egg, but later on associated with ideas of self-discipline and austerity) likewise suggests a process of development from within, rather than creation by command from without.[3]

*The later Vedas, etc.* In the later Vedas, in the *Brāhmaṇas*, and in the early *Purāṇas*, which in date partly overlap and partly follow the later Ṛig-Vedic hymns,[4] there is little that is of importance for our study. Their interest lies chiefly in the sacrificial ritual, and there are few indications of genuine

[1] Ṛig-Veda, X, 90; Griswold's translation, op. cit. p. 345. Cf. W. S. Urquhart's *The Vedānta and Modern Thought*, Oxford, 1928, p. 16; and Dasgupta, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 21.

[2] See, e.g., Ṛig-Veda, X, 121. [3] See, e.g., Ṛig-Veda, X, 129.

[4] For the dates of the *Brāhmaṇas*, etc., see Keith, op. cit., p. 20 ('not later than 500 B.C.'); or Dasgupta, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 14.

philosophic thought. Such philosophic ideas as do occur follow the general tradition of Monism, and the traditional descriptions of the origin of the world as a sacrificial or procreative process.[1]

## B. The Upanishads

*Their wide range and variety.* The Upanishads, though sometimes technically regarded as 'appendices to the *Brāhmaṇas*', bring us into quite a different atmosphere, and into a realm of ideas of much greater importance.[2] They contain an immense mass of material, covering a long period of nearly a thousand years, and including several different types of philosophic thought.[3] In such a collection of writings, it is natural that we should find not a few inconsistencies, both real and apparent. 'The Upanishads cannot legitimately be treated as a single unified, philosophical source . . . To speak therefore of "the philosophy of the Upanishads" is likely to be misleading.'[4] Nor do the differences tend to become less in the hands of later

[1] See, e.g., *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, I, iii, 13, and III, ix, 1-4. (*Sacred Books of the East*, Vols. XII and XIII.)

[2] 'To the Indian mind the passage from the Brahmanic to the Upanishadic thought is probably the most remarkable event in the history of philosophic thought.' (Dasgupta, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 31; cf. p. 283.)

[3] Western scholars are on the whole disposed to date the Upanishads from the sixth century B.C. onwards. Keith, for instance, (op. cit., pp. 497–505) groups them as follows, noting at the same time that the *relative* dates of these groups are easier to determine than their *actual* dates:

Group I—*About sixth century* B.C.

1. Aitareya Āraṇyaka (Ait. Ār.)
2. Aitareya Upanishad (Ait. Up.)
3. Bṛihad Āraṇyaka (Bṛih.)
4. Chāndogya (Chānd.)
5. Taittirīya (Taitt.)
6. Kaushitaki (Kaus.)

Group II—*From c. 400* B.C. *onwards*

7. Kena (Kena)
8. Kaṭha (Kaṭha)
9. Īsā (Īsā)
10. Śvetāśvatara (Śvet.)
11. Muṇḍaka (Muṇḍ.)
12. Mahānarāyaṇa (Mah.)

Group III—*Relatively late*

13. Prasna (Prasna)
14. Maitrāyaniya (Mait.)
15. Maṇḍukya (Maṇḍ.)

Indian scholars are generally inclined to favour earlier dates; e.g., Radhakrishnan speaks of the accepted dates as 'from 1000 B.C.' (op. cit., Vol. I, p. 5). But Dasgupta (op. cit., Vol. I, p. 28) agrees with Keith, and assigns the early Upanishads to the period 700–600 B.C.

[4] M. H. Harrison, *Hindu Monism and Pluralism*, London, 1932, p. 298.

commentators, who themselves follow differing schools of philosophic thought.

Nevertheless, the reader of the Upanishads will soon become conscious of certain broad lines of thought which constantly recur and dominate the argument, and which need to be borne in mind, if we would understand the conception of Divine immanence which is set forth therein.

### *The Central Purpose of the Upanishads: the Search for Salvation and Reality*

The central purpose of these ancient thinkers was to find 'salvation', i.e. deliverance from the troubles and restlessness of this life. Their souls could find no rest in the many things of this visible world; but they were led to a deep conviction that behind the visible world there is one invisible Reality which gives meaning and unity to the things we see. To 'unveil' this Reality, which is obscured by the unreal appearance of things, is their supreme task:

> The Real's face is covered o'er.
> That do thou, O Pūshan, uncover.
> —Īsā. 15; cf. Bṛih. V, xv, 1.[1]

*Their main principles.* The reader of the Upanishads will do well to note the main principles upon which the argument is built; for sometimes conclusions which seem strange to us are deduced from principles which we cannot but respect. Some of these principles we may now note.

*(a) God (The Real) is beyond all human words or thought.* The Upanishads hold that, since every attempt to define God necessarily limits Him, it can only be met by the truly reverent mind with the protest: *Neti! Neti!* (Not so! Not so!) To the Hindu philosopher, 'there is nothing higher than this teaching.'[2] But it leads to very negative conceptions of God, as a being who is without qualities (*nirguṇa*) and without mark (*aliṅga*) (Svet. VI, ii; Kaṭha VI, 8), and even 'Non- Being' (Taitt. II, 7).

Further, because personality, as we know it, involves

[1] The quotations from the Upanishads are from the translation in R. E. Hume's *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, Oxford, 2nd ed., 1931.

[2] Bṛih. II, iii, 6; cf. III, ix, 26; IV, ii, 4, etc.

limitation, the Upanishads generally prefer to describe the Supreme Being as 'impersonal' rather than personal; as 'It', rather than 'He'.[1] Such a conception may seem to be cold and lifeless; yet it springs from a true reverence, which desires to safeguard the idea of God from all limitation. There is no mistaking the note of genuine religious awe in such passages as the following:

Other, indeed, is It than the known,
And moreover above the unknown.
. . . . . .
That which is unexpressed with speech
That with which speech is expressed—
. . . . . .
It is conceived of by him by whom It is not conceived of.
He by whom It is conceived of, knows It not.
—Kena I, 3, 4; II, 11.

In the attempt to describe the indescribable, the Upanishads use not only the negative method, but also that of verbal paradoxes:

It moves. It moves not.
It is far, and It is near.
It is within all this,
And it is outside of all this.
—Īsā 5; cf. Chānd. III, xiv, 2.

Such apparent contradictions do not spring from a careless inconsistency, but rather from a sense of the inadequacy of any single phrase to express the whole of Reality.

(*b*) *God is all-inclusive.* This is another aspect of the Divine Supremacy: God is so great that nothing can be outside of Him.

Brahma before,
Brahma behind, to right and to left.
Stretched forth below and above,
Brahma, indeed, is this whole world, this widest extent.
—Muṇḍ. II, 11.

[1] See Radhakrishnan, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 97, where it is contended that the vacillation between the description of the Supreme as 'It' and 'He' in the Upanishads indicates the capacity of Hinduism to satisfy both the philosophic and the religious types of mind. It may be noted here that the word *puruṣa*, (often translated 'person') as used in the Upanishads, hardly carries the associations of 'personality' in the human sense. See J. N. Rawson, *The Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, Calcutta, 1934, p. 29.

If this idea is pressed to its logical extreme, it leads us to a Monism in which all distinctions and qualities disappear. But in practice the Upanishads are generally content to deduce from it less drastic conclusions; such as, that God is to some extent in all things, and all things are therefore to some extent divine; or that the One is the only ultimate Reality, so that all also (including even the gods of the Veda) depend for its being upon Him.[1]

(*c*) *God and the world are organically one.* In the Upanishads (as in some of the Ṛig-Vedic hymns) the relation between God and the world is not pictured in terms of creation from without, but in terms of emanation from within. The metaphors of sacrifice (Bṛih. I, i, 1) and birth, begetting, procreation, or emanation (Bṛih. I, iv, 4, 5, 17), recur frequently, and are supplemented by others which express a similar conception of origin from within.

> As a spider might come out with his thread, as small sparks come forth from the fire, even so from this Soul come forth all vital energies (*prāṇa*) all worlds, all gods, all beings.
> —Bṛih. II, i, 20.

This conception of the relation between God and the world as a close, organic, essential unity, lies near to the heart of Hinduism.[2]

(*d*) *God is beyond Good and Evil.* The qualities which we call 'ethical' are but rarely ascribed to the Supreme Being in the Upanishads. Generally speaking, the One is represented as morally neutral—'apart from the right (*dharma*) and apart from the Un-right (*a-dharma*)', (Kaṭha II, 14; cf. Taitt. II, 9). This 'moral neutrality' characterizes also the effect of Divine action upon man:

> This one, truly indeed, causes him whom he wishes to lead up from these worlds, to perform good action. This one, also, indeed, causes him whom he wishes to lead downward, to perform bad action. —Kaus. III, 8.

It would not be fair to attribute this belief merely to moral indifference. It is largely due to the desire to conceive

[1] See Harrison, op. cit., p. 129.

[2] See, e.g., Radhakrishnan, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 185 ff.

of God as wholly unlimited, and therefore, wholly supreme.[1] Nevertheless, the dangers of such a conception are evident, and indeed haunt the whole history of Hindu thought.[2]

Now, bearing in mind these general principles of the Upanishads, we may turn to study their bearing upon the subject of Divine immanence.

### *The Main Features of the Idea of Divine Indwelling in the Upanishads*

(*a*) *God is within the whole world.* Few ideas occur more constantly in the Upanishads than this; and the Divine indwelling is pictured in many illustrations, mostly drawn from the realm of material things:

> It (the *Ātman*) is like fire and wind, entering into 'the world, and becomes corresponding in form to every form, . . .'
> —Kaṭha V, 9 and 10.

> It 'pervades all things. As butter is contained in cream, . . .'
> —Śvet. I, 16.

> It is like a frame: 'across space alone is that woven, warp and woof'.—Bṛih. III, viii. 7.

> It is in the world 'even to the finger nail-tips, as a razor would be hidden in a razor-case, or fire in a fire-holder'.
> —Bṛih. I, iv, 7.

By means of this variety of metaphors, we gain a vivid impression of a Divine Essence, indwelling everywhere, in everything, inescapable, permanent, essential. Nowhere in the history of human thought is this conception set forth with a richer variety of illustrations.

With regard to the nature of 'that which indwells', we find in the Upanishads some traces of primitive materialistic ideas, such as that It is like water (Bṛih. V, v, 1), or fire (Kaṭha V, 9) or space (Chānd. I, ix, 1). But the very variety of these metaphors suggests that no single one of them is intended to be adequate in itself. There is, however, one symbol for the

[1] We may recall that even in the Old Testament, God is represented as saying: 'I make peace, *and I create evil*' (Isaiah xlv, 7). On the other hand, in the Upanishads there are passages which affirm that no one can attain to the Supreme without ceasing from bad contact and acquiring peace of mind: e.g., Kaṭha II, 24.

[2] See below, Chap. iv, conclusion.

indwelling Reality—a symbol material and yet elusive—which has won for itself a permanent place, not only in Hinduism, but in most of the higher forms of religion. This is the symbol of 'breath', 'air', or 'spirit' (*Ātman*) used to express the indefinable, unseen Reality, which is the Soul that dwells within the world and within man, and which the Upanishads declare to be identical with the Supreme, Absolute Brahman.

> This Soul (*Ātman*) is Brahma, the all-perceiving.
> —Bṛih. II, v, 19.

But though in the Upanishads, 'that which indwells' is not in any crude sense 'material', the fact remains that these thinkers always seem to have preferred to use material and spatial metaphors in the descriptions of the Divine indwelling, rather than metaphors drawn from human and personal relationships. Perhaps that is natural, in view of their hesitation to ascribe personality to the Supreme God; but it indicates a profound difference between the Upanishads and all theistic conceptions of Divine immanence.

(*b*) *God is in all things, but not equally in all things.* The Divine immanence in the Upanishads is (as we have seen) universal; it is not, however, reduced to a dead level of uniformity, but is found in various degrees or grades. For instance, in one of the earliest of the Upanishadic writings, we read that *Ātman* is present in trees as sap; in animals as consciousness; and in man as intelligence.[1] This is in accord with the 'norm' of Hindu teaching. It is true that here and there we come across a passage in which all distinctions seem to be merged in the general assertion of universal immanence,[2] but these are exceptions. The Upanishads are often popularly spoken of as 'pantheistic'; but if by Pantheism is meant the view that all things are equally Divine, then the Upanishads are not truly pantheistic.

(*c*) *God dwells in a special way in man.* The general principle laid down in the Upanishads, that God is in all things in varying measure, naturally suggests that His indwelling in man, as the highest known type of life, must be of special importance. This is summed up in the famous words, *Tat*

[1] *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* XI, iii, 32; quoted by Keith, op. cit., p. 523.

[2] 'Everything is Kṛishṇa, from Brahma to a pillar.' (From the *Pāñcharātra Āgamas.*) Quoted by Radhakrishnan, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 497.

*Tvam Asi*, 'Thou art That';[1] i.e., 'Thou man, who thinkest thyself to be a separate little person, art in reality one with Brahma the Absolute, with *Ātman* the World-Soul.' Not only is the World-Soul identical with Brahman the Absolute, but the individual human soul is also identical with Brahman. This is the Great Truth, the Secret of Salvation, nine times repeated to Śvetaketu by his father (Chānd. VI, viii-xv). The line of thought leading up to this truth is as follows: The names and forms of things have only a secondary reality. The *shape* of a piece of clay or copper or iron is only secondary; the reality behind it is just clay, or copper, or iron; and by dealing with one piece, we can know the characteristics of the underlying reality. So our little self is 'the trace of this All, . . . a footprint' (Bṛih. I, iv, 7) through which we can find It. Therefore as long as we imagine our Soul or Self to be a separate entity, we are under a delusion; we must throw off this illusion of separateness, if we would realize our Divine Essence. We are like little drops of water in the ocean, imagining that we are enclosed in a glass phial, cut off from all around us; we need only to realize that the glass is not real at all, and at once we shall find ourselves part of the Great Ocean, happy in the realization of this, and secure in the immortality of the whole.

> He (*Brahma*) is your soul (*ātman*) which is in all things.
> —Bṛih. III, iv, 1.

> Now, the light which shines higher than this heaven, . . . verily, that is the same as this light which is here within a person.
> —Chānd. III, xiii, 7.

> That Eternal should be known as present in the self (*ātma-saṁstha*).
> Truly there is nothing higher than that to be known.
> —Śvet. I, 12.

We may notice here again (as we noticed in dealing with the relationship between God and the world) that if the unity between God and man is pressed so far as to become identity, then the conception of Divine indwelling in man becomes meaningless; for in that case man loses his human individuality,

[1] Chānd. VI, viii, 9, etc. The complementary saying is: *Aham Brahma asmi* (I am Brahma)—Bṛih. I, iv, 10. See Urquhart, op. cit., p. 31.

and God loses His distinctive divinity. But in the 'norm' of Upanishadic teaching, the principle of *Tat Tvam Asi* is not usually pressed to this conclusion. At the same time, there is a tendency in the Upanishads to depreciate the value of personality, whether human or divine; and the interpretation of the *Tat Tvam Asi* teaching is generally in the direction of explaining personality in terms of an indwelling, impersonal essence, rather than of explaining the Divine Essence in terms of personality.[1] Nor is there much emphasis on the *moral conditions* necessary for the Divine indwelling in the human soul; though occasionally this is touched upon; e.g., in Kaṭha II, 24; III, 7, 8.

The language of the Upanishads concerning the essential unity of God and the human soul may sound strange and even presumptuous to those who are accustomed to the emphasis which is laid by the 'transcendentalist' religions on the essential separateness of the Creator from the creation. But it is not far removed from the common language of devout souls of many faiths who have believed that they have had in their own hearts a real experience of God and of mystical union with the Divine. Only, while the latter have in most cases reached their conclusions by way of instinctive feeling and experience, the Upanishads proceed rather along the road of reasoning; and consequently the argument is marked by exceptional precision and clearness of expression.

(*d*) *God is transcendent, as well as immanent.* The Upanishads, while emphasizing the all-pervasiveness of the Divine indwelling in the world, frequently remind us also that the Supreme is *more* than all the things we see or know, and that consequently He (or It) can neither be identified with the world, nor merged in the world:

> So the one Inner Soul of all things
> Is corresponding in form to every form; and yet is outside.[2]
> —Kaṭha V, 10.

> He who, dwelling in all things, yet is other than all things, whom all things do not know, whose body all things are, who

[1] See Harrison, op. cit., p. 213.

[2] Cf. Rawson's notes on the passage, and his translation of Śvet. III, 9, 10: 'By him, the person, this whole world is filled Who utterly transcends the world.'—op. cit., p. 178.

controls all things from within—He is your Soul, the Inner Controller, the Immortal.—Bṛih. III, vii, 15.

In such passages the world is interpreted as a real expression of God, but not a complete expression; for God is more than the world, and more real than it is. Indeed, since the world derives its reality solely from God, and rests in Him, it is better to say that 'the world is in God', than that 'God is in the world'.

*Conclusions.* We have seen that in the Upanishads, various lines of philosophic thought are to be found, which cannot be easily welded into a single system.[1] The earlier Polytheism has quietly dropped into the background; tendencies to Theism have occasionally manifested themselves, but have failed to win a predominant place; and the main trend of thought has remained monistic, emphasizing the one underlying Reality which pervades all things and includes all things. At the same time, the Monism is not generally pressed to such extreme conclusions as to exclude either Divine immanence or Divine transcendence. Both of these ideas are set forth in the Upanishads; but the emphasis falls more on the former than on the latter.

Although Hinduism has never had a 'Canon of Scripture' to which all its teachers have been bound to submit as the ultimate authority in matters of doctrine, the Upanishads are generally looked up to by later teachers as the highest standard of Hindu philosophy. Amid the wide variety of schools of thought which have found a place in Hinduism—Theism, Atheism, Pantheism, Dualism, etc.—it is Monism which holds the central place in the Hindu tradition, provides the framework within which subsequent systems seek to win recognition, and receives at least a formal profession of allegiance from the majority of orthodox commentators.

[1] Dasgupta, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 50, finds three main currents of thought in the Upanishads:

(1) —the strongest—that Brahman-Ātman is the only Reality, and that the world we see is Illusion;

(2) that Brahman may be identified with the Universe;

(3) a feebler current, tending towards Theism, with Brahman as Creator and Ruler of the Universe.

Cf. also Macnicol, op. cit., Chap. iii.

## C. The Bhagavad-Gītā[1]

The teaching of the *Gītā* is in many aspects akin to that of some of the Upanishads; but its influence in India is so outstanding that it requires separate consideration. Its background is monistic, but the theistic element in it is strong and notable. Hindu thinkers, from Śaṅkara to Mahatma Gandhi, have regarded it as 'the epitome of the Vedas', and found in it their greatest practical guide and solace in life.

*The Central Idea of the* Gītā *is the Identification of the Supreme Brahman with Kṛishṇa.*

Kṛishṇa was probably originally a historical warrior-hero of the Aryans, about 1000 B.C., and was afterwards regarded as an incarnation of Vishṇu;[2] but in the *Gītā* he is equated with Brahman the Absolute; so that whatever is claimed for Brahman —or indeed for any Divine Power—in the Vedas, is here treated as applicable to the Lord Kṛishṇa. From this, two main conclusions follow:

(*a*) Kṛishṇa is the Self (*Brahman-Ātman*); and as such, is eternally pre-existent and indestructible:

> Never is he born or dies; he came not into being, nor shall come hereafter; unborn, abiding, eternal, ancient . . . —II, 20.

(*b*) Kṛishṇa is the All-Pervading Power (*vibhuti*), immanent in all things, the essence of all the elements. By him alone are these interspaces of heaven and earth pervaded (XI, 20); and he dwells in the heart of every being (XVIII, 61).

[1] With regard to the date of the *Gītā*, Farquhar and Hopkins both regard it as probably an old Upanishad, re-written in the early Christian era in the interests of the Kṛishṇa-cult. (J. N. Farquhar, *Outline of the Religious Literature of India*, London, 1920, p. 92; E. W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, Boston, 1908, p. 389.) But Hill holds that the *Gītā* was written as a unity, by a devotee of Kṛishṇa, 'not later than 150 B.C.', as 'an uncompromising eirenicon'; i.e., insisting that the various existing schools of thought and cults can all be reconciled by being 'taken into' the worship of Kṛishṇa.—(W. D. P. Hill, *The Bhagavadgītā*, London, 1928, pp. 14–16.) The extracts given below follow Hill's translation. Dasgupta also regards the *Gītā* as a unity, but places it earlier; 'in the Buddhistic period, long before the Mahābhārata' (op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 550 ff.).

[2] See Hill, op. cit. pp. 5–14.

> In water, I am savour, . . .; in moon and sun, I am the light; . . . in ether, sound; . . . in fire I am the brilliance; life in all beings am I . . . —VII. 8, 9.

Kṛishṇa claims to be in both good and evil; in the deceit of the gambling dice, as well as in the heroism of heroes (X, 36-41); 'of my pervading powers divine there is no bound' (X, 40). Yet the 'all-pervading' is not everywhere in the same degree. Here, too, the *Gītā* follows the Upanishads. A distinction is drawn between his Lower Nature, which is divided among the Eight Elements of Nature (Earth, Water, Fire, etc.), and his Higher Nature, which is described as 'other than this—Very Life, by which . . . this universe is upheld' (VII, 5).

Moreover, Kṛishṇa's indwelling in the human soul is sometimes described in the *Gītā* as subject to certain moral and spiritual conditions, such as disinterested good works, and devotion:

> . . . if without attachment a man works, he gains the Highest. —III, 19.

> Through devotion (*bhakti*) does he (a man) recognize me . . .; . . . then . . . at once he enters into me.—XVIII, 55.

But while Kṛishṇa is immanent in all, he is also personal and transcendent, and more than the 'all' in which he abides. This teaching is even more prominent in the *Gītā* than in the Upanishads. Thus we read that the Supreme is '. . . detached, and yet upholding all; . . . Without beings, yet within them' (XIII, 13-15); He is 'Sustainer of all beings, yet not dwelling in beings' (IX, 5). He is 'father of this universe, the mother, the creator, the grandsire; the way, the sustainer, the lord, . . . the origin, the dissolution' (IX, 17-18). He proclaims, 'I with one *part* of myself have established the world' (X, 42). He is even described as the 'spectator' (*Upadrashṭṛi*) of Nature (XIII, 21).[1]

Such passages are definitely theistic, and in line with the tradition which we traced in the *Hymn to Puruṣa* and in the

[1] This term is expounded by Śaṅkara to denote 'one who, himself inactive, watches a sacrifice'. (Hill, op. cit., p. 227 n.); and if so, it is almost a 'Deistic' conception.

Kaṭha Upanishad.[1] According to this view, 'God, in his superpersonality, transcends even Brahman, in the sense that Brahman is only a constitutive essence in the complex personality of God'.[2]

At the same time, Kṛishṇa, though personal, is sometimes described as passionless towards all:

> All beings I regard alike; not one is hateful to me or beloved.—IX, 29.

Yet this is followed at once by the promise that 'Those who with devotion (*bhakti*) worship me, abide in me and I in them'; and that such *bhakti* will 'justify' even the soul that is of evil life (IX, 30). So in the *Gītā* the personal aspect of God seems on the whole to prevail over the impersonal, and the moral conditions of Divine Indwelling over the idea of universal and essntial immanence.

*The re-births of Kṛishṇa on earth.* Besides the ideas that we have been considering, which are largely common to the Upanishads and the *Gītā*, we also find that in the *Gītā* great prominence is given to the belief that at certain times Kṛishṇa is re-born on earth in special forms:

> Many births of me are passed . . . Though unborn and immutable in essence, . . . yet governing Nature which is mine, I come into being by my delusive power (*māyā*).
>
> For whensoever right (*dharma*) declines, . . . and wrong (*adharma*) uprises, then I create myself.
>
> To guard the good and to destroy the wicked and to confirm the right, I come into being in this age and in that.—IV, 5–8.

These periodic self-creations of Kṛishṇa on earth differ from permanent immanence, in that they are only occasional and voluntary, and not inherent or essential; and also because behind them lies a definite moral purpose. They are often spoken of as the 'incarnations' of Kṛishṇa. But the *Gītā* does not discuss the relation between these occasional 'incarnations' and the conception of universal Divine immanence.

*The transmigration of Souls.* The doctrine of the Transmigration or Re-incarnation of human souls into other bodies on earth after death (*Saṁsāra*), which is found occasionally in

[1] See above, pp. 18, 19, 27, 28. [2] Dasgupta, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 524.

the early Upanishads,[1] comes into much greater prominence in the later Upanishads, and also in the *Gītā*, where it is viewed as an oppressive 'burden' from which the soul must seek deliverance.[2] This idea of human reincarnations would familiarize its adherents with the general idea of the indwelling of 'spirit' in 'matter'; but on the whole it belongs to animistic ways of thought, and has little distinctive contribution to make to the higher conceptions of Divine indwelling.

*Karma and Divine Immanence.* Another central idea of Hinduism, which also had begun to find a place in the Upanishads,[3] and achieves a still more prominent place in the *Gītā*, is the principle of *karma.* This has been described as 'the law of the conservation of moral energy', which is preserved in the form of a 'deposit' of good or evil, acquired by good or evil actions in this (or a previous) existence, and indissolubly attached to the human soul as it passes, by the process of reincarnation, from one existence to another. The idea of *karma* remained at the heart of Hinduism all down the centuries; and the question naturally arises: Is it connected with the idea of Divine Immanence, which is also an essential part of Hindu thought? It is not, however, easy to find any causal connexion between the two conceptions. It is true that the idea that a man's *karma* survives his physical death, and becomes reincarnate with him in another life, might suggest that *karma* itself is something that 'indwells' in human lives. But the process is in no sense a personal or voluntary one, and could hardly be described as a process of Divine immanence, unless God is conceived of in a purely impersonal way.

From this summary of the idea of Divine immanence in the *Gītā*, it will be evident that it is on the whole in harmony with that of the Upanishads, or developed therefrom. But the emphasis in the *Gītā* is emotional rather than intellectual; and logical inconsistencies are even more evident here than in the Upanishads. For while the general background of thought in the *Gītā* remains monistic and immanentist, the notes of Theism

[1] e.g. Chānd, V, x, 7; Kaṭha V. 7; see Hume, op. cit., Introduction, pp. 55-7.

[2] *Gītā*, II, 22; V, 19; VII, 7, etc.; cf. Hill, op. cit., pp. 37 and 54 ff.

[3] e.g., Bṛih. IV, iv; Mait. III, etc.

and Transcendentalism become more distinct; but they are left standing in isolation, like foreign rock-boulders in a soil of which they do not form a natural part. The *Gītā* is full of such fragments: of *Saṁkhya* philosophy and *Yoga* practice, of primitive Animism and Vedantic Monism, together with the newer note of fervent *bhakti*. All these are here; and the *Gītā* seems to welcome them all, provided that over them all is written the name which the *Gītā* sets above every name—KṚISHṆA.

# CHAPTER IV

## BUDDHISM, JAINISM AND LATER HINDUISM

IN this chapter we shall first consider two great movements which, springing originally from Hinduism, have now come to be regarded generally as separate religions: Buddhism and Jainism. In these, the idea of Divine indwelling holds but a small place; nevertheless, historically they belong to 'the Religions of Immanence' rather than to 'the Religions of Transcendence'. This is true also of most of the 'six systems' of Hindu philosophy, which will next claim our attention. After these, we shall pass to the great commentators on Hinduism, particularly Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja. Finally, we shall turn to the Bhakti cults and the reformers of Hinduism, who, while inheriting the Hindu tradition, felt the need for a more intimate personal relationship with God than was offered by the philosophers.

### A. BUDDHISM

*Buddhism as an offshoot of Hinduism.* Buddhism was born in the age of the Upanishads,[1] and its background is essentially that of Hindu philosophy. As Rhys Davids says:

> Gautama was born and brought up and lived and died a Hindu. There was not much in the metaphysics and principles of Gautama which cannot be found in one or other of the orthodox [Hindu] systems.[2]

[1] The traditional date for the birth of Gautama Buddha is 567 B.C.

For a fuller account of Buddhism, the reader may refer to the following books, among many others:

A. B. Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy in India and Ceylon*, Oxford, 1923. (Critical.)

T. W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, New York, 1887, 1907, etc. (Appreciative.)

J. B. Pratt, *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism*, New York, 1928. (Appreciative.)

*What is Buddhism?* By the Buddhist Lodge, London, 1928. (A modern apologia.)

B. H. Streeter, *The Buddha and the Christ*, London, 1932.

Also, from the Hindu standpoint, Radhakrishnan, op. cit., Vol. I, Chaps. vii and xi, and Dasgupta, op. cit., Vol. I, Chap. v.

[2] Rhys Davids, op. cit., 1887 edition, p. 85.

And although Gautama's followers have at times strayed far from his teaching, the distinctive Hindu doctrines of *Saṁsāra* and *Karma*[1] have always remained an integral part of Buddhist thought.

*The 'Atheism' of primitive Buddhism.* Yet in one vital respect, Buddhism differs from the Hinduism of the Upanishads. For while the latter definitely point to One Great Reality (sometimes described as the World-Soul, and occasionally even as a personal God) behind the phenomena of the world, Gautama has nothing to say with regard to this; and some of his most famous disciples, such as Nāgasena, and the *Hīnayāna* school in general, have expressly denied the existence of any such reality.[2] Neither in the world nor in man do they admit the existence of any 'soul'; all that exists is a bundle of *skandhas* ('aggregates of bodily or psychic states'), without any unifying entity behind them.[3] But if there be neither world-soul nor human soul, there is obviously no place for Divine indwelling of any kind; and so, as long as Buddhism keeps close to the teaching of its founder, we need not look within it for any such idea.

*The transformation of Buddhism by monistic and theistic ideas, and the Monism of the Mahāyāna School.* But Buddhism has undergone many transformations in the course of its long history. In the period from 200 B.C. to A.D. 600 the negations of *Hīnayāna* Buddhism were being modified, first in Northern India, and afterwards in China and Japan, by the rise of the *Mahāyāna* School,[4] in which the older agnosticism with regard to the ultimate Reality is replaced by a philosophy akin to that of the Upanishads. Thus the *Catechism* of the Shin Sect says:

[1] See above, pp. 31, 32.

[2] See Radhakrishnan, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 453–6.

[3] See *What is Buddhism?* p. 44.

[4] The early *Mahāyāna* books were probably written in Kashmir or neighbouring districts, about the time of Kanishka (first century A.D.) (see Farquhar, *O.R.L.I.*, pp. 111–5) and spread in the fifth century A.D. to the further east. Today, the *Hīnayāna* or Southern School of Buddhism prevails in Ceylon, Burma, Siam and Cambodia; while the *Mahāyāna* School holds the field further east, in China and Japan. See K. J. Saunders, *Epochs in Buddhist History*, Chicago, 1924, Chaps. iv–vii.

> By the Real Substance of the Universe we mean the underlying Essence of matter and mind. . . . Real substance is the *Dharmakya* (the Body of the Law) the spiritual essence which neither is born nor perishes.[1]

Here we are evidently very close to the teaching of the Upanishads, and the way seems open for a doctrine of the Immanence of the Real (or the 'Eternal Buddha') in mind and matter. But in fact, there is little evidence that this idea was developed by the *Mahāyāna* philosophers, except perhaps in the realm of art.[2]

*Buddhist mysticism.* Buddhism has had its Mystic Way; and mysticism generally connotes some indwelling of the Divine in the human soul. But this has not been so in Buddhist mysticism, at any rate of the Zen School.

> As Hīnayāna Buddhism is a religion without a God, so Zen is a form of mysticism without communion.[3]

Now where there is no communion between the human soul and the Divine, there can be no place for any personal Divine indwelling. So the utmost that Buddhist mysticism will say is that the mind of man is 'perfumed by the Thatness (*Bhutatathata*)';[4] and a more attenuated metaphor than this it would be difficult to find!

Even in the case of the Bodhisattvas (those who have attained to Buddha-hood), although in popular Buddhism they are practically worshipped as gods, yet the well-instructed Buddhist does not claim that the man who seeks to attain the Bodhisattva ideal is indwelt by the Divine, or uplifted by Divine grace. On the contrary, he must climb to Buddha-hood by his own efforts, 'manœuvring his armies' (i.e., the latent capacities within himself) so as to develop them to the utmost.[5]

*Popular Buddhist devotion.* In the Far East, popular Buddhism has moved even farther away from the *Hīnayāna*, emphasizing the need of devotion and worship directed to a

[1] Pratt, op. cit., p. 650.

[2] A recent western writer on Buddhist Art says: 'The Buddha-nature is immanent not only in man, but in everything that exists.' And he adds that this is the cause of the sense of affinity between the artist and the world of nature. (Arthur Waley, *Zen Buddhism and Its Relation to Art*, London, 1922, p. 24.)

[3] Pratt, op. cit., p. 637.

[4] Pratt, op. cit., p. 255.

[5] See L. de la V. Poussin in *E.R.E.*, Vol. II, p. 752, Art. 'Bodhisattva'.

personal God, and the assurance of Divine grace bestowed by God upon His devotee. In Japanese Buddhism today, Amida Buddha is addressed as 'our Heavenly Father'; the faithful are taught to meditate on 'the Grace of Buddha'; the devotee who has faith in Amida is uplifted 'not by his own strength but by the strength of another'; and his goal is 'the union of his heart with the heart of Amida'.[1] In all this the personal indwelling of the Divine in man is clearly taught and experienced. But to the enlightened Buddhist, this is merely 'concession' to unlearned piety. Nevertheless, modern Buddhist apologetic often shows some disposition to modify the rigidity of *Hīnayāna* Atheism, at least in the direction of a Monistic Idealism, if not of actual Theism.[2]

*Conclusion.* From this brief survey, it appears that although in primitive Buddhism as preached by the Buddha no place was left for God or for Divine immanence, in later Buddhism, especially of the popular type, both monistic and theistic ideas have found a place; and, together with these, occasional suggestions of a Divine indwelling in the world and in the believer's heart. At the same time, compared with the clear and central affirmation of Divine immanence in the Hindu Scriptures, these suggestions are very slight; and on the whole we are justified in saying that the idea of Divine indwelling is not characteristic of Buddhism.

## B. JAINISM

The Jain system of thought is closely related to Buddhism, though less famous and less widespread. Its origin goes back,

[1] Pratt, op. cit., pp. 648–55.

[2] Cf. the following quotations from the Neo-Buddhist booklet, *What Is Buddhism?*—(pp. 13, 30, 44, 81).

(1) 'Buddhism rejects the idea of a Personal God, but not the idea of a Reality or Noumenon beyond phenomena.'

(2) 'The Buddhist doctrine of *An-atta* (Non-Soul) does not deny the existence of any kind of soul; but only that of a soul in man separating him from all other forms of life.'

(3) 'Atman is the Universal Principle, manifesting (*sic*) as the One Life, which shines through every form of life, from mineral to man.'

(4) The Buddha's teaching that 'all life is a stream of becoming' is hailed as a 'prophecy' of the modern idea of Evolution, with an ordered purpose immanent in its operation.

like that of Buddhism, to about the sixth century B.C.; and it, too, is an offshoot of Hinduism.[1] It agrees with Buddhism in denying the existence of a personal God; and the only 'gods' recognized by Jainism are the souls of great heroes (*Arhats*) who have attained to divinity.

> Those philosophers who say that the world was created, either by the gods, or by Brahman, or by Iśvara, do not know the truth.—*Sūtrakṛitāṅga*, II, 1.[2]

Clearly then there is little room in Jainism for any idea of Divine immanence, as taught in the Upanishads. Jainism, however, incorporated into its metaphysics a good deal of Animism, and also the doctrines of *Karma* and *Saṁsāra*;[3] and one of the central ideas of Jainism (in contrast with Buddhism) is that of *Jīva* (soul, or life) which indwells not only the things that we commonly regard as alive, but also stones, water, and wind, as well as plants, animals and man. Only space and matter are *ajīva*, devoid of life.[4]

Thus the Jain, though an Atheist, is not a Materialist; he believes in an 'invisible life' immanent almost everywhere in the visible world around him; and this is the reason why his most distinctive tenet is the duty of *ahiṁsā*—the refusal to destroy life, even in its humblest forms. So he might be described as a believer in vital immanence, but not in Divine immanence.

### C. The Six Brahmanical Systems of Hindu Philosophy

The six 'systems' offer an immense but obscure field for study.[5] Even their dates are hard to define, except that they may be assigned with tolerable certainty to the centuries shortly before and after the beginning of the Christian era. For the

[1] For further details of Jainism, see, e.g., H. Jacobi, in *E.R.E.*, Vol. VII, Art. 'Jainism'; Mrs Sinclair Stevenson, *The Heart of Jainism*, London, 1915; Radhakrishnan, op. cit., Vol. I, Chap. vi; Dasgupta, op. cit., Vol. I, Chap. vi.

[2] For translations of the Jain writings, see H. Jacobi, *Jaina Sutras* (*S.B.E.*, Vols. XXII and XXVIII).

[3] Sinclair Stevenson, op. cit., pp. 89–91.

[4] See Jacobi, in *E.R.E.*; Radhakrishnan, op. cit., Vol. I., pp. 314 ff.

[5] See, e.g., F. Max Müller, *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, London, 1916 and Radhakrishnan, op. cit., Vol. II, 1927, Chaps. ii–vii.

most part, they do not offer much fresh contribution to the study of our subject. Their efforts after logical consistency generally lead them either to Atheism or to Deism, in neither of which is there any real place for the idea of Divine immanence. Hence the evidence that they offer us is mainly negative, showing that Hinduism, even when interpreted by its own adherents, does not necessarily include the idea of Divine immanence.

*The Nyāya and Vaiśeshika Systems, and the Karma Mīmāṁsā*[1] regard God only as 'First Principle', able to create and destroy at intervals, but exercising no influence on the normal course of the world. The only link between God and the world is 'Mind', which is defined as an Atomic Substance, operating in a mechanical way. Such systems leave no place for any idea of Divine indwelling in the world.

*The Sāṁkhya System* denies both the Absolute, and a Personal God,[2] and allows only a purely impersonal process of evolution, in which the idea of Divine immanence can have little or no place.

*The Yoga System of Patañjali*[3] is formally theistic rather than atheistic; and we might expect (in view of its interest in mystical practices) that some kind of Divine indwelling in the soul would be recognized, as at least one factor in the soul's salvation. But in fact, this does not appear to be so; and Yoga too, in practice, ignores Divine indwelling, even in the human soul.[4]

It is only in the *Vedānta Sūtra* (or *Uttara Mīmāṁsā*) of Bādarāyaṇa, commonly regarded as the sixth of the six systems, that we find ourselves, as it were, in the main stream of Hindu

[1] For the *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeshika*, see Keith, *Indian Logic and Atomism*, Oxford, 1921, esp. pp. 272 ff., 244 ff.; and for the *Karma Mīmāṁsā*, see Keith, *The Karma-Mīmāṁsā*, Calcutta, 1923.

[2] For the Atheism of the Sāṁkhya, see Keith, *The Sāṁkhya System*, 2nd, ed., Calcutta, 1924, pp. 93, 99, 101. Radhakrishnan, more cautiously, says, 'The Sāṁkhya does not uphold Theism, and is indifferent to the supremacy of Absolute Spirit' (op. cit., Vol. II, p. 316).

[3] For the Yoga System, see, e.g., R. Garbe in Hastings' *E.R.E.*, Vol. XII, pp. 831–3, Art. 'Yoga'.

[4] See Radhakrishnan, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 371; and cf. R. Otto, *Mysticism, East and West* (trans. B. L. Bracey and R. C. Payne), London, 1932, pp. 71, 143.

Monism. Here Brahman is described as 'the Cosmic Breath', 'the Light of the Soul, residing in the heart of man', 'the Omnipresent God occupying a limited space', 'the Single Supreme Spirit which is the Source of everything'.[1] Such phrases bring us back to the philosophy of the Upanishads, and allow scope for a conception of Divine immanence, both in the world and in man.

### D. Śaṅkara's Advaita Monism, or Vedānta

Śaṅkara, the great Hindu philosopher of the eighth century A.D., was the author of a system of thought which many scholars have regarded as 'the most important and interesting that has arisen on Indian soil'.[2] Śaṅkara himself claims that his teaching is an interpretation (indeed the only possible interpretation) of the Upanishads and the Vedānta Sūtra; and though this claim has been questioned by other interpreters,[3] it has so far won recognition that Śaṅkara's system has come to be generally known as 'the Vedānta' (the end of the Vedas), and is considered to be the 'norm' of orthodox Hinduism.

In Śaṅkara, we find that Monism is pressed to its extreme conclusions and taught in its most uncompromising form. The only reality is the one Brahman or Ātman, undivided, unconditioned, 'omnipresent like ether' and 'absolutely homogeneous, so that all difference or plurality is illusion (*Māyā*)'.[4] Besides this One, nothing else really exists; the Many are but unreal

[1] See Radhakrishnan, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 436; cf. Max Müller, op. cit., Chap. iv.

[2] So G. Thibaut, in his Introduction to Śaṅkara in *S.B.E.*, Vol. XXXIV. Similarly, Radhakrishnan assigns to Śaṅkara 'a place among the immortals' (op. cit., Vol.II, p. 658).

[3] E.g., by Rāmānuja; and among the moderns, Keith dismisses Śaṅkara's attempt to deduce his teaching from the Upanishads as a *tour de force* (*Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, p. 508). On the other hand, Urquhart (op. cit., pp. 65–71) considers that 'on the whole, Śaṅkara reproduces and carries further the main tendencies of the Upanishads'—though not (to the same extent) of the Sūtra.

[4] See, e.g., *S.B.E.*, Vol. XXXIV, pp. xxx and 9. A large part of Śaṅkara's *Bhāshya* (Commentary on the Vedānta Sūtras) will be found in *S.B E.*, Vols. XXXIV and XXXVIII. See also Dasgupta, op. cit., Vol. I, Chap. x, and Vol. III, Chap. xi; and Radhakrishnan, op. cit., Vol. II, Chap. viii.

appearances. Nor can the One be described in any way; every such attempt must be met by the firm protest, '*Neti! Neti!*' (Not so! Not so!). In this austere and abstract conception, there would seem to be no place for any thought of Divine immanence; for if everything apart from Brahman is mere illusion, there is nothing real left for It to indwell.

But even Śaṅkara, after laying down this main principle with uncompromising rigidity, seems prepared to make concessions to the human desire to attribute some reality to our experience of the manifoldness of life. He distinguishes between the Higher Knowledge of 'things as they are', and a Lower Knowledge of 'things as they seem to be'. The Higher Knowledge leads us to the Higher Brahman, without qualities (*nirguṇa*) the Pure Absolute, who is 'separate from souls', and has no contact with aught beside Himself.[1] But on the plane of the Lower Knowledge (which is illusory, yet not wholly untrue), we are led to the Lower Brahman, who is Brahman associated with illusion (*Māyā*). This Lower Brahman may be conceived of as a personal God, *Īśvara*, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of all things.[2] Śaṇkara even speaks of Īśvara as creating the world without tools by a mere decision (*saṅkalpa*);[3]—a phrase which has an almost deistic note. But generally he represents Īśvara in theistic terms, as a Person who is immanent in the world that He has made, both in things animate and inanimate, with 'increasing manifestations', as we pass from the lower to the higher forms of existence.[4]

Thus Śaṅkara, after apparently ruling out all idea of Divine immanence by his main principle of undivided Advaita Monism, ends by providing for a full and rich conception of an all-pervasive but 'graded' indwelling of Īśvara in every part of the

[1] See *S.B.E.*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 344 (*Bhāshya*, II, i, 27); and Urquhart, op. cit., pp. 117 and 149 f.

[2] See *S.B.E.*, op. cit., Vol. XXXIV, pp. xci ff.; cf. Urquhart, op. cit., pp. 57, 113.

[3] See Otto, op. cit., p. 108. Otto even claims that Śaṅkara was 'a passionate theist' on the plane of the Lower Knowledge! (op. cit., p. 105; cf. p. 112, where he describes Śaṅkara's Monism as 'super-Theism, rather than anti-Theism'.)

[4] See *S.B.E.*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 172 (*Bhāshya* I, iii, 13); and *S.B.E.*, Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 178 ff. (*Bhāshya* III, ii, 34–37).

world, closely akin to the immanentism of the Upanishads. But he admits this only as a 'concession', a 'Lower Truth', mingled with illusion.

Śaṅkara's negative conception of the Supreme God may seem to be over-abstract and incapable of evoking any feelings of emotional worship; while the weakness of the ethical note in his system, and its depreciation of the significance of personality, human and divine, will appear as grave, perhaps even vital, defects.[1] Yet we should do less than justice to Śaṅkara did we not recognize that behind his dialectic lies 'that fundamental feeling of the stupendousness of the Universe',[2] which, even if it often leads to intellectual agnosticism, is also akin to the reverent awe without which there can be no truly religious 'awareness' of the Divine. Indeed Śaṅkara's Monism will surely live for all time as one of the great achievements of the human mind, and one which no seeker after truth can afford to neglect.[3]

## E. Reactions towards Theism within Hinduism

*The general characteristics of Hindu Theism.* While Śaṅkara's Monism has come to be generally accepted as the normal standard of Hindu orthodoxy, the 'secondary tendency', towards Theism and the worship of a personal God, which we noted from the Ṛig-Veda and Upanishads onwards, is developed by a long succession of Hindu thinkers and saints throughout the centuries. With many of these, the motive is evidently religious rather than philosophical, and is based on experience, rather than on pure reason; though reason often comes in to justify the experience, and to explain it in terms of a philosophic system. Their dissatisfaction with the Advaita Monism of Śaṅkara is due

[1] See Otto, op. cit., Part B, Chaps. iv–x, where Otto, after pointing out the striking resemblances between Śaṅkara and the great Western mystic, Meister Eckhart, proceeds to set forth the contrast between the two in the sphere of Ethics. See also below, Chap. ix.

[2] Urquhart, op. cit., p. 55.

[3] Max Müller, however, surely went too far when he suggested that 'Vedānta teachings may, under a strange form, bring us very near to the earliest Christian philosophy', and that 'the lifting up of the *Tvam* into the *Tat* might prove the equivalent of the idea of Divine Sonship' (op. cit., p. 124).

primarily to the fact that in their own religious experience they had both sought and found a Personal God, willing to give back love for love, and meeting their devotion by His grace. They decline to identify the world of phenomena with this God, but affirm that both it and He are to be regarded as real and distinct entities.[1]

Compared with Theism of the Jewish or Christian type, the central motive of Hindu Theism tends to be emotional or intellectual, rather than ethical; and it is based on an 'awareness of God', rather than on a 'passion for righteousness', such as generally characterizes Monotheism.

Most of the Hindu Theists claim to base their doctrines upon the authority of the Vedas and Upanishads; and they challenge the right of Monism, or any non-theistic interpretation, to be truly orthodox. The Sacred Books of Hinduism, as we have seen, contain so many varying lines of thought that it is not difficult to adduce from them 'proof-texts' for both Monism and Theism, as well as for Atheism and Deism. Orthodox Hinduism can thus include within itself a range of systems which differ from one another even more widely than (say) those of Quakerism and Catholicism, which have been built by Christians upon the common authority of the Bible.

The Theistic Movement stretches from the *Gītā* down to the seventeenth century A.D., and includes the development of *bhakti* (devotion), which gives its primary attention to the Divine indwelling in the human soul, rather than in the world at large.

*Bhakti and Theism in South India.* The characteristic note of *bhakti* is heard, as we noticed, in the *Bhagavad Gītā*;[2] and after this, it is echoed from time to time in almost every part of India; at first particularly in the south, where the two rival schools, Vishṇu-worshippers and Śiva-worshippers, use almost the same accents of devotion as they hymn their respective deities.

*The Kural.* One of the earliest Tamil writings is the *Kural* of Tiruvaḷḷuvar; and in this the author pictures God in theistic

[1] An excellent survey of the theistic tendencies within Hinduism will be found in Macnicol's *Indian Theism.*

[2] See above, p. 30.

terms as 'a personal Being, transcendent and infinitely great, yet in intimate touch with the world He has created, and full of grace and truth.'[1]

*The Alvars.* A few centuries later, the Alvar poets began to sing their songs of devotion to Vishṇu under various names, wandering from village to village through the Tamil country. Traditionally, the Alvars are twelve in number, extending from the seventh to the tenth century A.D. Their prevalent note is that of restless, almost painful, longing for God, and an overpowering sense of sin; and their conception of God is always intensely personal. At times they picture Him as the friend of man, whose grace is freely bestowed in human hearts. In one of the poems of Tirumaṅgai Alvar, the god Vishṇu (incarnate as Rāma) assures his devotee: 'Thou art my friend: stay here!' and the poet cries in return:

> That the great grace thou further purposed him
> —Never to leave thy sacred feet—
> May also come to me, thy feet I seize,
> Lord of Śrīraṅgam with its beauteous trees.[2]

Mythology, rather than theology? Yes; but where God is pictured as calling man His friend, and bestowing on him His grace, we are in the realm of a Theism which can conceive of God as personally indwelling in the human soul—not inevitably or essentially, but as a free gift of the Divine graciousness to sinful man. The Alvars sang their songs out of full hearts; but it was left for another and a more famous worshipper of Vishṇu to show how personal love to a personal God is capable of philosophical exposition and defence.[3] To him we must now turn.

*Rāmānuja's Viśishṭādvaita System.* About two and a half centuries after Śaṅkara and the earlier Alvars, stands a figure, scarcely less great than Śaṅkara as a philosopher, and perhaps

[1] H. A. Popley, *The Sacred Kural*, Calcutta, 1931, p. 70. Popley places the *Kural* 'not later than the *fourth century* A.D.' (p. 9).

[2] J. S. M. Hooper, *Hymns of the Ālvārs*, Calcutta, 1929, pp. 41–43; quoted from Tirumaṅgai: Periya Tirumoli, V, 8.

[3] See Hooper, ibid., p. 6. 'The Āḻvār provided the soil out of which Rāmānuja's teaching naturally sprang. . . . In him, Bhakti shines in the full splendour of a great philosophical exposition.'

greater as a teacher of religion—Rāmānujācharya the Vaishṇava, in whom we find 'the highest intellectual altitude reached by Indian Theism'.[1]

Rāmānuja, like Śaṅkara, claimed to base his teaching on the Hindu scriptures, and affirmed that the Absolute Brahman is the Great Reality behind all phenomena. But he vigorously, and even passionately, attacks the central dogmas which Śaṅkara had deduced from the Upanishads and Vedānta Sūtras. In the opening section of his *Śrī Bhāshya*,[2] he thus summarizes his conclusions:

> The *Śāstras* (Sacred Books) do *not* teach the doctrine of One non-differentiated (*Advaita*) substance.
>
> They do *not* teach that the Universe of things is Illusion (*Māyā*).
>
> They do *not* deny that intelligent beings and non-intelligent things are essentially distinct from the Lord.[3]

These propositions are direct contradictions of Śaṅkara. What then does Rāmānuja put forward as his alternative interpretation of the Vedas? The main points of his system may be summarized thus:

(*a*) *The Supreme Being is a Person.* Brahman, in Rāmānuja's view, is 'the Highest Person, possessed of intelligence and thought'.[4] He is also a Person of moral character, 'essentially antagonistic to evil, of uniform goodness, differing in nature from all beings other than Itself'.[5] We shall not find God (says Rāmānuja) through a series of negations; but if we would reach a worthy idea of God, we must climb up to it through the highest we know, and strive after something higher still. To say that God is a Person is not to make Him a *limited* person like ourselves; but it is to affirm that, whatever more there may be in Him, He is assuredly not lower in the scale of life, and not *less* personal, than we ourselves are. Thus, Rāmānuja is

[1] Macnicol, op. cit., p. 107.

[2] The *Śrī Bhāshya* is Rāmānuja's commentary on the Vedānta Sūtras, parallel to Śaṅkara's *Bhāshya*. A translation of the *Śrī Bhāshya* will be found in *S.B.E.*, Vol. XLVIII; another translation is by M. Rangachariar and M. L. V. Aiyengar, Madras, 1898.

[3] *Śrī Bhāshya*, I, i; *S.B.E.*, Vol. XLVIII, p. 102; cf. Rangachariar and Aiyengar's translation, p. 156.

[4] *S.B.E.*, p. 207.

[5] *S.B.E.*, p. 402.

essentially a theist, rather than a monist; though he still offers a formal allegiance to the monistic ideal.[1]

(*b*) *God is both the Creator and the Soul of the World.* Creation, according to Rāmānuja, is the work of a God who 'transcends the destructible'. It need not be conceived of as the work of a moment, but as a gradual process;[2] and its method may be inferred from what we can see of the real, though miniature, 'creative powers' of human souls on earth. The world-process is cyclic, each era being closed by a dissolution, after which the work of creation begins again.

In describing the permanent relation of God to the world, Rāmānuja uses chiefly the picture of God as 'the Soul of the World', which is His body. Now this relationship implies both a measure of transcendence and a measure of immanence; for the soul cannot be identified with the body or any part of the body, though it does live within the body. So (says Rāmānuja) God dwells within the world, and yet is other than the world:

> The whole totality of beings 'is' Brahman, only in the sense that it is related to Him, as body is related to soul.
>
> Brahman owns the intelligent and non-intelligent things as His body.
>
> There is no fusion of the character of the Enjoyer and the thing enjoyed.[3]

Rāmānuja's answer to the objection that this involves the Absolute in limitations is as follows:

> Brahman modifies Himself into the world; but such modification (*parināma*) is not such as to introduce imperfections into Brahman; on the contrary, it confers limitless glory.[4]

This view differs from Śaṅkara's Advaitism, in that it definitely maintains an essential *distinction* between Creator and created. It is true that the method of creation here suggested is nearer to that of 'emanation' than of formation from without, and indeed resembles a theory of 'Creative Evolution'; but the transcendence of the Creator is never lost sight of, or merged in the totality of things as they are. And Rāmānuja (as the

[1] See Rangachariar and Aiyengar, ibid., p. 7.
[2] *Śrī Bhāshya*, I, i. 3; *S.B.E.*, Vol. XLVIII, p. 170.
[3] *Śrī Bhāshya*, I, i, 1; *S.B.E.*, Vol. XLVIII, p. 142.
[4] I, iv., 27; *S.B.E.*, p. 402.

above quotation shows) holds that a Supreme Person, who limits Himself by and at the same time manifests Himself in this creation, is more 'glorious' than an unlimited and unknowable Absolute.

(*c*) *God is one with man, but not identical with man.* Rāmānuja accepts the famous *Tat Tvam Asi* principle of the Upanishads,[1] and the consequent essential unity between God and man; but he is careful to distinguish between *unity* and *identity*. To those who hold that *Tat Tvam Asi* implies the identity of the human self with Brahman, Rāmānuja replies that it only denotes 'a grammatical equation' or 'a co-ordination of constituent parts', and that its true meaning is: 'In That, all this has its self.'[2] The human self (he maintains) has a real existence of its own; and this leaves the way open to conceive of a real indwelling of God in man, which is possible because of the essential kinship of the human with the Divine, while at the same time it is not rendered meaningless by the merging of the two into one and the same.

(*d*) *God is good.* In place of the morally neutral Absolute One of Monism, Rāmānuja bids us worship a Supreme God who is 'essentially opposed to evil, and of uniform goodness'. And if God is good, it is certain that He will demand moral, as well as intellectual, qualities from those who seek to know Him truly.[3]

Thus Rāmānuja recognizes the value of the moral and emotional elements in religion, as well as the purely intellectual. His conception of the world as God's body, and the soul of man as God's shrine, offers us a scheme within which there is room for a fully theistic view of God and the world. Indeed, from the Christian standpoint, Rāmānuja is among the greatest of the Hindu prophets.

*Madhva's Dvaitic System.* A little later than Rāmānuja, another South Indian Vaishṇava, Madhva of Udipi, rejected Śaṅkara's Advaitism even more decisively than did Rāmānuja. Madhva's system is essentially *Dvaita* (Dualist). God and the

[1] See above, p. 30. [2] *S.B.E.*, pp. 629–38.

[3] Both Rāmānuja and the author of the *Gītā*, says Prof. E. W. Hopkins, 'did an immense service by reinstating God as a real being and as an omnipotent ethical being, and by making it incumbent upon the worshipper to be moral as well as pious.'—*Ethics of India*, Yale, 1924, p. 213.

world are so separate that God must be approached through a mediator. But God (Vishṇu) is the Ruler and Controller of the world and of men's souls; and in response to their devotion, He bestows His grace upon His worshippers, and to this extent indwells in their hearts.[1]

*The bhakti of the Śaivas.* In spite of the fierce rivalry in South India between the followers of Vishṇu and Śiva, the note of personal devotion (*bhakti*) is struck in very similar tones by both the sects. In Śaivism, as in Vaishṇavism, the *bhakti* tradition can be traced back to the seventh century A.D., or even earlier;[2] and in both cases, the devotion of the worshipper is met by the answering grace of God. Appasami (seventh century A.D.) hails Śiva as the only true 'God in the Soul', in contrast to other external gods who fail to satisfy the heart's needs.[3] Māṇikka Vāsakar (ninth or tenth century A.D.) cries to Śiva in his *Tiruvācagam*:

> Transcendent Being! Lord of those in heavenly courts
> Who dwell, All Hail!
> Giver to me of every grace, . . . All Hail!
> Thou spotless One, who didst make me, an outcast wretch, thine own,
> The thought that other god exists than Thee, the One,
> My soul shall never own![4]

Here the singer proclaims a monotheistic faith, not as the result of reasoned thought, but as an expression of emotional loyalty to Śiva, in return for the gift of free, unmerited grace. This 'grace' (*arul*) might be described as a *temporary* indwelling of the power of God in the soul; but there is no merging of the soul in God.

*The Śaiva Siddhānta.* Just as the Aḷvars were provided with philosophic defence of their *bhakti* by Rāmānuja, so the Śaiva devotees found intellectual support from the philosophers of the Śaiva Siddhānta, which was the chief school of philosophy in South India from the eleventh century A.D. onwards. They

[1] For Madhva, see Radhakrishnan, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 737–51, or Macnicol, op cit., p. 113.

[2] See F. Kingsbury and G. E. Phillips, *Hymns of the Tamil Saivite Saints*, Calcutta, 1921.

[3] Kingsbury and Phillips, op. cit., p. 55.

[4] Quoted in G. U. Pope's *Tiruvacagam*, Oxford, 1900, p. xcvii.

have always contended against the principles of Advaita Monism and *Māyā*;[1] they have taught that 'the soul retains its individual existence, sharing the blessedness of the Supreme, but unmingled with His Essence';[2] and that *moksha* (salvation) the soul's eternal goal, is a 'conscious, full enjoyment of Śiva's presence'.[3] The Śaiva philosophers and saints for the most part confined their interest to God's relation to the human soul, and did not deal with His relation to the world at large.

*The Maraṭha bhakti-poets.* Some centuries later than these Tamil saints, a group of Vaishṇava poets in West India gave expression to their experience of God, in psalms and hymns of singular beauty. These, too, intellectually accept the orthodox monistic view of God as the all-pervading; but their real interest is in the God within their own souls. To them (as to the Śaiva *bhaktas*) it is a thing most wonderful that the Supreme One should come to dwell in their sinful hearts. They are intensely conscious—perhaps even more so than the Tamil saints—that sin *separates* man from God and, in a sense, limits and prevents God's indwelling. At least, He cannot be *realized* effectively where there is sin or blindness. So Eknāth, in the sixteenth century A.D., writes:

> God dwells in all, and yet we find,
> To him the faithless man is blind.
>
> Water or stones or what you will,—
> What is it that he does not fill?
>
> Lo, God is present everywhere,
> Yet faithless hearts see nothing there.[4]

Even more plaintively beautiful is Tukārām of Pandharpur (b. A.D. 1608):

> There is no place, small as a sesamum,
> But thou, they say, art there.
> That deep in all this universe thou dwell'st
> Sages and saints declare.

[1] See R. W. Frazer, in *E.R.E.*, Vol. XI, p. 956, Art. 'Śaivism'; also Nallasvami Pillai's *Studies in Saiva Siddhanta*, Madras, 1895 and *Śiva-jñāna-bodha*, Madras, 1911 (English trans.).

[2] Pope, op. cit., p. lxv.

[3] Pope, op. cit., p. xliv.

[4] Macnicol, *Psalms of Marāṭhā Saints*, Calcutta, 1919, p. 54.

So, I, of old thy child, in faith of this
Come seeking help from thee.
Thou overflow'st the world, and yet, and yet,
Thy face I cannot see.[1]

It would seem as if Tukārām found the doctrine of God's universal immanence in the world a hard one, which he accepted on the authority of the Hindu tradition, though he could not verify it from his own experience; but he knew that the companionship of God in his own heart, as Saviour and Protector, was the greatest reality of his personal life:

Holding my hand thou leadest me,
My comrade everywhere.
As I go on and lean on thee,
My burden thou dost bear.

. . . . . .

So like a happy child I play
In thy dear world, O God.
And everywhere—I, Tukā, say—
Thy bliss is spread abroad.[2]

Yet, with all his sense of God's nearness, Tukārām insists with unusual vehemence upon the *distinction* between man and God, as essential for true religion:

He who worships God must stand distinct from Him,
So only shall he know the joyful love of God;
For if he say that God and he are one,
That joy, that love, shall vanish instantly away.

Pray no more for utter oneness with God;
Where were the beauty, if jewel and setting were one?

The heat and the shade are two;
If not, where were the comfort of shade?

Mother and child are two;
If not, where were love?
Pray, then, no more for utter oneness with God.[3]

In such words the Hindu saint seems to have travelled far from the 'norm' of Hindu orthodoxy, and to be expressing

[1] Macnicol, op. cit., p. 66. [2] Macnicol, op. cit., p. 71.
[3] J. S. Hoyland, *An Indian Peasant Mystic*, London, 1932, p. 19 f.

a definitely theistic experience of God as a Person, infinitely near and yet eternally distinct from His creatures.

*Theism and bhakti in North India.* The reaction against Monism was also felt in North India, though not so early as in the South and West. In the fifteenth century A.D., Rāmānanda, who belonged to the Śrī Vaishṇava school of Rāmānuja, displayed a fervent personal devotion to the Supreme God under the name of Rāma; and his followers (the Rāmānandis) maintained this tradition, side by side with conformity to the usual practices of popular idol-worship.[1] Similarly, Tulsī Dās (A.D. 1532–1623), while accepting the terminology of Advaita Monism, and the mythology of the Hindu Pantheon, says, 'The worship of the Impersonal laid no hold of my heart.'[2] After Tulsī Dās, the theistic movement in North India takes a note of more definite revolt against orthodox Hinduism; and those who took up the mantle of Rāmānanda and Tulsī Dās may best be considered later on, among the 'Hindu Reformers'.

*Bhakti in Bengal.—Vaishṇava and Śaiva.* Another name which stands out with special eminence in the succession of the *bhaktas* is that of Chaitanya, the Vaishṇava saint of Bengal.[3] In him we see *bhakti* carried to extravagance, rather than to a climax; devotion has become infatuation; and the Divine Presence in the soul produces frenzy rather than quiet bliss. But the main notes of the older *bhakti* poetry are maintained; the formal philosophy of *Viśishṭādvaita* (here called *Achintya-bhedābheda*, 'simultaneous distinction and non-distinction') is accepted; but the dynamic of the movement is a passionate love of Kṛishṇa as a personal Deity, and a self-abasement before Him which prevents the devotee from ever identifying himself, or putting himself on a level, with his Lord. One of the few surviving *ślokas* written by Chaitanya himself runs thus:

> Your all-pervading power is multiplied by your own name, . . . my whole world is made empty, because of the separation from Govinda (Kṛishṇa). . . . Count me, your servant, as a particle of dust on your lotus-feet!'[4]

[1] See Farquhar, *O.R.L.I.*, pp. 323–7. It is noteworthy that Rāmānanda accepted Muslims as his disciples. [2] Macnicol, *Indian Theism*, p. 116.

[3] See M. T. Kennedy, *The Chaitanya Movement*, Calcutta, 1925.

[4] Quoted in Kennedy, op.cit., pp. 90–91.

Very similar is the *bhakti* of the Śaiva poets of Bengal, who pour out their devotions to Kāli (Śiva's consort) with alternate terror and trust.[1] But the relation of devotee and Deity here, though intensely personal, contains little suggestion of spiritual unity or indwelling. Indeed, in the *bhakti* of Bengal we see in an extreme form certain weaknesses which have generally been latent in Hindu religion, even when it takes on a theistic note: particularly the emphasis upon quantity rather than quality in religious devotion, and an apparent carelessness as to the moral character of the Deity worshipped, so long as intense emotional fervour is evoked. In connexion with *bhakti* of this type, we often meet with the worship of God under forms which are by no means suggestive of the highest conceptions in the mind of the worshipper, and which tend to drag down the soul, rather than to uplift it.

Fervent *bhakti* has often been offered especially to *avatars*, or incarnations of the Divine in animal or human forms,[2] which are often far from elevating or inspiring. The belief in such temporary incarnations, though at first sight akin to the idea of Divine immanence, really indicates that the philosophy of the Upanishads had no great hold on the popular Hindu mind. For incarnations of this kind lose their significance when God is realized as present everywhere and at all times; they gain their importance from the belief that, apart from such incarnations, God is relatively absent from the world at large.

But while admitting frankly the weaknesses of Hindu *bhakti*, we should also recognize gladly its great services to India. It has kept the fires of personal religion burning, and saved the ideas of God and the human soul from being merged in an impersonal abstraction. It has bidden us think of the Divine indwelling in man in the personal terms of Companionship, Friendship, Protection, and Grace, rather than in terms of spatial or material content. Its note of reverence and devotion has

[1] See *Bengālī Religious Lyrics, Śāktā*, by E. J. Thompson and A. M. Spencer, Calcutta, 1923; especially the poems from Rāma Prasad Sen (A.D. 1718–75).

[2] Notable examples of *avatars* are found in the 'Ten Incarnations' of Vishnu, also in Tulsī Dās's *Rāmāyana* (17th cent. A.D.), in which the epic is 'edited' so as to stress the incarnation of the god Rāma.

checked the tendency to identify humanity with the Godhead, and has clothed the thought of God's Presence in the human heart with a touch of wonder and surprise that so great a grace can be really true. There is much that is beautiful and helpful here. It is true that on the whole, we miss the note of virile hostility towards evil. But that note was struck by some who, while standing in the *bhakti* tradition, brought into it a further note of challenge and reform. To these we must now turn.

## F. The Idea of Divine Immanence in the Hindu Reformers

We must devote our attention to a succession of Hindu teachers, from the sixteenth century A.D. onwards, whose ideas show signs of the influence of the great rival religion of Islam, which was then spreading across India. This influence is seen partly in a dissatisfaction with Hindu idolatry which, when contrasted with the dignified Muslim worship of Allah, failed to satisfy mature minds; partly in a more decisive emphasis on the ethical note in religion; and sometimes in the plea that Hindu and Muslim ways of thought are, after all, only different aspects of truth.

But few, if any, of the Hindu reformers seem to have felt that the challenge of Islam required them to reconsider the fundamental monistic basis of Hinduism, or to replace it by the Transcendentalism of Islam. Almost invariably they reaffirm their belief in the One Underlying Reality, side by side with their faith in, and devotion to, a personal God. Indeed, some of them seem to go further than most of the earlier Hindu *bhaktas* in affirming the complete unity, or even the identity, of the human soul with God. Perhaps here we may trace the influence of Sūfism,—that strange pantheistic reaction against Deism, which took place within Islam, and became widespread in India.[1]

### *Kabīr*

Pre-eminent among the early reformers stands Kabīr (*c.* A.D. 1440–1510) who, though a Muslim by name, and probably

[1] For an estimate of Muslim influence on the Hindu reformers, see Farquhar, *O.R.L.I.*, p. 331; and for the Sūfīs, see below, p. 90 f.

by birth,[1] was a disciple of Rāmānanda, and learnt from him the spirit of Hindu *bhakti*. Kabīr's religion shows a curious mixture of Hindu and Muslim ideas, together with a rugged independence of mind which refused to bind itself wholly to any one system. His teachings are contained chiefly in two writings, the *Bījak* and the *Ādi Granth*. At times he seems simply to echo the Monism of the Upanishads:

> He [God] is one; there is no second.
> He who must be seen without qualities (*nirguṇa*); by what name shall I call Him?[2]

And this One is immanent everywhere:

> Wherever, wherever one looks, there, there is He the same; He is to be found in every vessel;
> He pervadeth the body, as well as the whole universe.[3]

Yet this is not the most characteristic note of Kabīr's teaching. Far more insistent is that of *bhakti* to God as a Person, generally under the name of Rāma; though Kabīr recognizes that names, after all, matter but little:

> Rāma, Khudā, Śaktī, Śiva, are one:
> [O God] . . . , whether Allah or Rāma, I live by thy Name; . . .[4]

It was indeed a bold and novel suggestion that it matters little whether God is called by a Hindu or Muslim name! No less bold is Kabīr's outspoken contempt for many of the existing practices and beliefs of religion, both Hindu and Muslim, which receive but scant regard at his hands:

> Devotion, sacrifice and rosary, piety, pilgrimage, fasting and alms.
> Nine *bhaktis*, Vedas, the Book (the Qur'ān), all these are cloaks of falsehood.
>
> Since my attention is fixed on God, . . .
> My dread of transmigration is at an end.[5]
>
> Into hell fall Turk [Muslim] and Hindu,
> Qāzi [Muslim teacher], Brahman both deserve it![6]

[1] See F. E. Keay, *Kabīr and his Followers*, Calcutta, 1931, p. 28.
[2] Keay, op. cit., pp. 69, 72
[3] Keay, op. cit., pp. 72, 73.
[4] Keay, op. cit., pp. 69, 84, 85.
[5] Keay, op. cit., pp. 74, 77.
[6] Keay, op. cit., p. 22.

Yet Kabīr continues to use the religious phraseology of traditional Hinduism, including such terms as *Karma* and *Māyā*. He was not a systematic thinker or philosopher, but a sincere soul, trying to tell of a genuine religious experience, in the only terms that he knew, with an instinctive moral indignation against religious unreality, whether in priestcraft or ritual. For him, the Great Reality was God in his own heart; and (in lesser measure) God present in every part of the world. So he was a true witness to the indwelling God:

> Him whom I thought without me I *now* find within me:
> When I found this secret, I recognized the Lord of the world.[1]

> God hath extended Himself in everything,
> Saith Kabīr, He shall know this.
> In whose heart is God, and in whose mouth is God.[2]

In Tagore's *One Hundred Poems of Kabīr* (which, however, Dr Keay and others think to have come from the pen of one of Kabīr's followers, rather than from Kabīr himself) we find a more philosophic exposition of the idea of Divine immanence:

> As the seed is in the plant, As the shade in the tree,
> As the void in the sky, As infinite forms in the void,—
> So, from beyond the Infinite, the Infinite comes;
> And from the Infinite, the finite extends.

> The creature is in Brahma, and Brahma in the creature;
> They are ever distinct, yet ever united. . . .
> Beyond both the limited and the limitless is He, the Pure Being.
> He is the Immanent Mind in Brahma and in the creature.[3]

*Nānak*

Closely akin to Kabīr is Nānak (A.D. 1469–1538), the founder and first Guru of the Sikh religion. Like Kabīr, he claims to be 'neither Hindu or Muhammadan'.[4] Like Kabīr, too, he starts from the monistic view of God as the All-Pervading One:

[1] Quoted by M. A. Macauliffe, in *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. VI, Oxford, 1909, p. 186.

[2] Keay, op. cit., p. 67.

[3] *One Hundred Poems of Kabīr*, translated by Rabindranath Tagore and Evelyn Underhill, London, 1926, p. 6.

[4] Macnicol, *Indian Theism*, p. 144. For Sikhism, see Macauliffe, op. cit.

In the beginning there was indescribable darkness; . . .
Then was no Brahma, Vishṇu, or Shiv;
No one existed but the One God. . . .
Nor did any one speak or tell of duality.[1]

Or again:

He Himself is One, and He himself is many;
He does not die nor perish; He neither comes nor goes
Nanak says, 'He is always contained in all things.'[2]

But Nānak, like Kabīr, combines this Monism with a note of Theism; for the creation of the world is described as an act of the Divine will, rather than as an unconscious process of emanation:

God Himself having created was pleased, and valued what He had done.

By His order bodies are produced; . . . (and) souls are infused into them; . . . some obtain their reward; . . . others must ever wander in transmigration. All are subject to His order; none is exempt from it.[3]

Here we note that while the ideas of *Karma*, *Saṁsāra*, and *Māyā* are retained from Hinduism, they are placed under Divine control, and thus made (as it were) parts of a theistic system. So too, while we read that the union between God and the soul is so close that

As water blends with water, when
Two streams their waves unite,
The light of human life doth blend
With God's celestial light.[4]

nevertheless, this indwelling is depicted as the act of a personal God:

(Man's) body is the palace, the temple, and the house of God; into it He putteth His eternal light.[5]

Nānak lays special stress upon the need for a Guru (teacher) as

[1] Macauliffe, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 165.

[2] Quoted by F. Pincott from the 'Ādi Granth', in E. G. Browne's *Religious Systems of the World*, London, 1903, p. 306.

[3] Macauliffe, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 165, 196.

[4] Ibid., p. lxv.

[5] Ibid., p. 375.

the mediator of God's revelation to man, and says that in the true Guru, the indwelling of God attains perfection:

> God has put Himself into the true *Guru* . . . In the true Guru (God) has become complete.[1]

In popular Sikhism, the outward obeisance shown to the Sacred Book (the *Granth Sahib*) in the Golden Temple at Amritsar can hardly fail to suggest to the unlearned Sikh worshipper that God is in some sense indwelling in it.

Of permanent value in Sikhism is the strong ethical note, which insists upon the moral conditions of true religion and union with God.

> Make kindness thy mosque, . . . good works thy creed and thy prayer, . . . by the practice of truth, thou shalt be delivered.[2]

*The Hindu Reformers of the Nineteenth Century*

For several centuries after Kabīr and Nānak, although there were a few Hindu teachers who to some extent broke away from current Hinduism in the direction of Theism, or at least of exclusive *bhakti* to one God,[3] they can hardly be classed as reformers who desired substantially to change the Hindu system.

But the nineteenth century brought a fresh challenge to Hinduism, this time from the West. The first effect of this impact of Western thought and practice was to fling some Hindu thinkers right away from their old moorings. Of these, the most famous was Rājā Rām Mohun Roy (1772–1833) whom some have considered to be 'the greatest Indian of modern times'.[4] He, too, starts from the common basis of Hindu Monism, though always marked by a distinct theistic note. Thus, in defending himself against criticism from Christian missionaries in 1823, he writes:

> In conformity with the precepts of our ancient religion contained in the Holy Vedant (though disregarded by the majority of moderns) we look up to ONE BEING as the animating and

[1] Macnicol, op. cit., p. 151.

[2] Macauliffe, ibid., pp. 38, 39.

[3] Among such we may mention Dādū and Rām Dās, in the later sixteenth century.

[4] J. C. Ghose, *The English Works of Ram Mohun Roy*, Calcutta, 1901, p. 14.

> regulating principle of the whole collective body of the Universe, and as the origin of all individual souls, which in a manner somewhat similar, vivify and govern their own particular bodies.[1]

This passage reminds us at once of Rāmānuja's conception of the World-Soul. Ram Mohun's antagonism to popular Hinduism became more and more marked as time went on; and in his thought of God, the note of intellectual contemplation of the Divine transcendence became predominant. In one of the early creeds of the Brahmo Samāj (the Reformed Hindu 'Church', of which he was the chief founder) the worship of God was defined as 'the contemplation of the attributes of the Supreme Being'[2] a phrase which is almost deistic in its austere aloofness, and which carries little suggestion of spiritual intimacy, indwelling, or union between God and man. But in its later developments, the Brahmo Samāj seems prepared to allow a larger place for the emotional and mystical elements in religion.[3]

Rām Mohun Roy had a wide vision of the religion of the future, which he set forth in his booklet *Universal Religion* (1829) where he maintained that 'all religions have a common moral and spiritual content, more or less'.[4] Such a conception was rare at that time; but afterwards it came to be one of the foundations upon which the idea of 'the Wider Immanence' of God was built up.[5]

In Western India, the Prārthanā Samāj was also founded on a theistic basis, combining the old Hindu conception of God as the All-pervading with a decisive emphasis on His moral qualities. In the Samāj's *Statement of Faith*, we read: 'God is the Creator of this universe . . . Eternal, Spiritual, the store of all Good, without form, One without a second, All-pervading, Merciful, All-holy, and the Saviour of sinners.'[6]

In such terms, we can see on the one hand the influence of Western thought upon the old Hindu Monism, and on the

[1] N. C. Ganguly, *Raja Ram Mohun Roy*, Calcutta, 1934, p. 77.

[2] Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, London, 1929, p. 37.

[3] For example, in a *Manual of the Sādhāran Brāhmo Samāj* quoted by Farquhar (*M.R.M.I.*, p. 38), God is described as one who 'communicates His light, strength, inspiration and blessing into the longing soul'.

[4] Ganguly, op. cit., p. 171.

[5] See below, Chap. xii.

[6] Farquhar, *M.R.M.I.*, p. 80.

other hand signs of the beginnings of that return to Hinduism as the national religion of India, which has gathered strength so rapidly during the last hundred years.

*The Idea of Divine Immanence in the Modern Hindu Revival*

The present-day revival of Hinduism among the 'intelligentsia' of India, while largely political in its motive, has been far-reaching in its results. It has been characterized by a decisive opposition to Christian missionary activity, and a determination to show that the virtues claimed by the missionaries on behalf of Christianity are in reality inherent in true Hinduism.

*The Ārya Samāj*, founded in 1875,[1] has been a rallying ground for this movement. It has taken as its watchword: 'Back to the Vedas!' and has tried to combine the principles of Vedic Monism with an ethical note strong enough to meet criticism from the side of Christian apologetic. The creed of the Ārya Samāj states that 'The All-pervading God is just, merciful, exempt from fear, and holy'; and corresponding ethical virtues are enjoined upon His worshippers.[2] In movements of this kind we can clearly trace the influence of Indian Nationalism, with its passionate desire to assert the sufficiency of the old religion of India to meet the needs of today. In Bengal, a similar motive has led many young men to seek through the Hindu religion for an indwelling Divine *Śakti* (power) to inspire them to heroism and sacrifice.[3] Thus does the changing political situation react upon theological beliefs.

*The Rāmakṛishṇa Mission.* A still more explicit return to Advaita Monism is advocated by the Rāmakṛishṇa Mission, which has now spread from Bengal to every part of India. Rāmakṛishṇa-Paramahaṅsa (1834–86) had an intense and often ecstatic consciousness of God within him, and regarded himself as an *avatar*.[4] But he taught that while the idea of God as personal is a useful concession to human thought, the highest truth is

[1] Farquhar, *M.R.M.I.*, p. 109; cf. H. C. E. Zacharias, *Renascent India*, 1933, p. 35.

[2] Farquhar, ibid., p. 120.

[3] See Ronaldshay, *The Heart of Aryavarta*, London, 1925, p. 128.

[4] *Life of Śrī Rāmakṛishṇa*, published by the Mission, Almora, 1929, pp. 291, 322, etc. This biography gives a naive and fascinating picture of the Master.

the Advaita conception.[1] In the Impersonal One all distinctions are merged, including human ideas of right and wrong. So Swāmi Vivekānanda, Rāmakṛishṇa's most famous disciple, insists that all human beings alike—prostitute and prophet, assassin and ascetic—are Divine. 'Ye, divinities on earth, sinners? It is a sin to call a man so! . . . Why go out to look for God? It is in your own heart, and you did not know. . . . You are not to be perfect; you *are* that already!'[2] Such a philosophy may seem likely to deprive moral distinctions of their meaning, and to merge Divine indwelling in the identity of God and man. Yet the Rāmakṛishṇa Mission has been a pioneer in social service, and has shown that it can produce men of high character and ideals.

*The Theosophical Movement.* Another phase of the modern revival of Hinduism is seen in the Theosophical Movement; but Theosophy is so elusive and esoteric that it is difficult to discover any fixed doctrines in its system. On the whole, its note is mystical and monistic rather than ethical; and the Ultimate Goal to which it points its devotees is an Absolute who lies beyond Good and Evil. 'Of the All-embracing' (says one of the great teachers of Theosophy) 'we can know nothing, save that It is.'[3]

*Conclusion*

Our rapid survey of the development of Hindu thought on the subject of Divine immanence has thus ended on the same note of philosophic Monism which we found holding a central place in the Hindu tradition at a very early stage. We have seen that so long as this Monism has been sufficiently elastic to allow of some distinction between God and the world, and some degree of reality to both, it has provided a thought-atmosphere congenial to the idea of Divine indwelling both in man and in the world at large; and this idea has, in fact, always held an important place in Hindu thought. It has been conceived and

[1] Ibid., pp. 292–4.

[2] See H. Haigh, *Some Leading Ideas of Hinduism*, London, 1903, pp. 107, 120.

[3] C. W. Leadbeater's *Textbook of Theosophy*; quoted in Farquhar, *M.R.M.I.*, p. 278.

pictured under a wide variety of metaphors and illustrations; but these have almost always been associated with the fundamental conception of Brahman, the One, the Unlimited, the All-pervading. From time to time, it has seemed as if this were being displaced by other types of thought; but not for long. Hindu devotees may have confined their worship to one personal God; Hindu philosophers may have questioned whether there be a God at all; but these have been only temporary phases. 'The one remains; the many change and pass.'

In closing this section of our study, we may point out some elements both of weakness and of strength in this Hindu conception of the Divine indwelling of the All-pervading ONE.

Its chief defects, viewed from the Christian standpoint, are seen in its depreciation of personality, and in its comparative disregard for the moral issues of life.

In describing the Divine indwelling, Hindu philosophy has generally eschewed the symbols of personal relationships; it has preferred to speak of the Indweller as 'It' rather than as 'He', and has pictured Its immanence in terms drawn mainly from physical and material processes. In so doing, Hinduism can claim the support of not a few eminent philosophers who stand outside the Hindu tradition, but who share the Hindu unwillingness to speak of God as a Person. Such misgivings are based largely on the feeling that personality, as we know it, always involves some measure of limitation, and is therefore unworthy of the Supreme Being. On the other hand, human personality, limited though it is, represents in many respects the highest point yet reached in the world-process as far as we know it; and to discard the category of personality in favour of material illustrations in our attempts to describe the Divine is surely to choose the second-best, when a better is available.

Another defect of Hindu Monism lies in its comparative disregard for the moral issues of life. Now it is quite true that we today can realize, in the light of the science of Comparative Religion, that moral standards vary much more widely than our forefathers imagined; and that a religion which does not conform to *our* moral standards is not necessarily

without a moral standard of its own.[1] But in the case of Hindu philosophy, it is not that it appeals to moral standards that are strange to us, but rather that it so rarely appeals to any moral standard at all. Any reader whose knowledge enables him to compare the Hindu scriptures with those of other religions cannot fail to notice how comparatively rare in the former is the contrast between good and evil, and how halting is the note of moral challenge. This is indeed a logical corollary from the monistic view of the Supreme Being as unlimited in any way, and therefore unable to 'take sides' in the battle of life. But to any one who has heard and obeyed the 'Moral Imperative' that comes to us through our conscience, this is profoundly unsatisfactory, and a defect that cannot be compensated for by any advantages in the realms of the intellect, or the æsthetic emotions.

A frank recognition of these defects need not, however, prevent us from appreciating the noble and inspiring elements in the Hindu conception of God as the All-pervading Indweller. This, conceived with the help of physical metaphors, makes a strong appeal to the intellectual, artistic, and mystical elements in our nature. It speaks to us of things unseen and eternal; of a Great Unity that comes near to us through the many channels of daily life. It meets a real need of human nature; it cannot lightly be dismissed as unimportant.

It is here that we find what Bepin Chandra Pāl called 'the peculiar Hindu spirit-consciousness, which is the heart of the new Hindu nation, as it was of the old Hindu race'. These words are quoted in the Epilogue to *The Heart of Aryavarta*,[2] which goes on to give us a striking picture of a great Indian scientist, Sir J. C. Bose, proclaiming with prophetic fervour his faith in this central conviction of Hinduism:

> His face was lit up by the fire of enthusiasm, and expression and voice alike became those of the seer. . . . Telling . . . of his discovery of the thinness of the partition between organic

[1] A timely protest against the wholesale condemnation of Hinduism as 'unethical' is made by Hopkins in his *Ethics of India*, pp. x–xii, and 225–57. Yet Hopkins frankly admits the many 'ethical aberrations' of Hinduism and traces them to the non-ethical Hindu conception of God (Chap. vii).

[2] p. 125.

and inorganic matter, he said: 'It was when I perceived in them [the results of his experiments] one phase of a pervading unity that bears within it all things—the mote that quivers within ripples of light, the teeming life upon our earth, and the radiant sun that shines above us—it was then that I understood for the first time a little of that message proclaimed by my ancestors on the banks of the Ganges thirty centuries ago:

'They who see but One in all the changing manifoldness of this universe, unto them belongs eternal truth—unto none else; unto none else.'

Verily, here is the heart of Hinduism.

# CHAPTER V

## PRE-CHRISTIAN THOUGHT IN THE WEST

### A. The Idea of Divine Indwelling in the East and the West

We frequently hear it said that the idea of Divine immanence is a special feature of Oriental thought. But in the West, also, it came into prominence at an early date, and was explored and expounded for many centuries. The beginnings of this process may be traced back to the sixth century B.C., and it extended on into the early centuries of the Christian era. Even in subsequent centuries, Medieval Christian theology was influenced, more perhaps than appears at first sight, by an undercurrent of pre-Christian Greek philosophy.[1] At the time of the Renaissance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, this undercurrent rose to the surface again; and since then it has been constantly reappearing in Western thought.

Among the Western peoples, the idea of Divine indwelling was developed chiefly in Greece. The 'barbarians' (as the Greeks contemptuously styled all foreigners) for the most part contributed little to serious philosophic thinking, except by providing a general background of animistic ideas; and the genius of Rome, unequalled though it was in the realms of organization and government, did not turn readily to philosophy or to spiritual religion. Indeed, in the popular religion of the Roman people, the idea of spirits (*numina*) indwelling in various material objects rose but little above the animistic level. 'The Roman mind', says Warde Fowler, 'was wholly incapable of metaphysical thinking;'[2] and he adds that though the Roman mind had a capacity for religion, it never really appropriated mystical ideas 'until Rome had almost ceased to be Roman'. It is true that later on the Stoic philosophy found in Rome some of its

[1] See below, Chap. ix.

[2] W. Warde Fowler, *The Religious Experience of the Roman People*, London, 1911, pp. 370, 380.

most notable exponents, such as Seneca;[1] but in Stoicism the real background of thought remains Greek rather than Roman.

In Greece, as in India, we find an almost unlimited variety of philosophic speculation—indeed even more unlimited in Greece than in India. For Greece had no volume of sacred scriptures, such as India possessed in the Vedas, to give at least some standard of 'orthodoxy'. Consequently, in Greece, conflicting schools of thought developed side by side, without any decisive victory in any quarter; and the numerous parallel lines of development make a chronological survey of the whole field very difficult.

In Greece, too, even more than in India, we find a wide gulf between the popular religion and the intellectual speculations of the philosophers. Most of the Greek philosophers (apart from Plato and the Platonists) show scarcely any trace of genuine religious experience; while the Greek temple-cults and the popular mythology went on, century after century, based upon tradition alone, and scarcely touched by the speculations of the intelligentsia, however sceptical these might be.

## B. The Popular Religion of Greece

### *Greek Mythology: Homer and other poets*

Greek mythology, although perhaps the best-known element in Greek religion, has but little direct bearing upon our study of Divine immanence; and it was never *de fide*, in the sense that all devout Greeks were required to believe in it.[2] It is not till the poems of Homer that Greek mythology emerges from its earlier obscurity into a comparatively clear historical setting, at some date probably not far from 1000 B.C.[3] There is much here that reminds us of the process by which the religion of India had emerged, a few centuries earlier, from its dim and unhistorical past, in the hymns of the Ṛig-Veda. Both groups of poems seem to have sprung from the Aryan race; and both present us with a 'pantheon' in which the gods are of various temperaments and types. In both groups, too, we see a tendency

[1] See below, p. 75 f.

[2] See A. S. Pringle-Pattison, *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion*, Oxford, 1930, p. 78.

[3] See, e.g., J. Adam, *Religious Teachers of Greece*, Edinburgh, 1909, pp. 21–56.

towards Monotheism,—Zeus in Homer occupying a position of supremacy which is at least superficially similar to that of Varuṇa in some of the Vedic hymns. But in both cases this Monotheism failed ultimately to prevail over the popular Polytheism, or to provide a stepping-stone to later philosophic developments. Indian and Greek philosophy alike proceeded to build up their main systems of thought on lines which paid little regard either to Varuṇa or Zeus; although in Greece the supremacy of Zeus remained formally recognized as a permanent feature of Greek theology.

The Polytheism of Homer is echoed in the later poets, from Hesiod onwards, and became the normal background of popular Greek religion; but it did not become the basis for 'immanentist' ideas. It is true that the gods of Homer may appear on the earth at any place or time; but they are not depicted as merely Nature-forces, nor as dwelling *within* the phenomena of the world. They are superhuman personalities, with localized bodies; and there is little or nothing in Homer, or in subsequent popular Greek mythology, to suggest the philosophic idea of a single Unseen Reality underlying the things that we can see and touch. Indeed, Homer has but little interest in the things unseen. To his mind, 'the body is more essential to personality than the soul';[1] and this offers but little basis for any philosophy of spiritual indwellings.

Yet perhaps the very inadequacy of Homeric Polytheism to satisfy the expanding ideals of the Greek thinkers may have indirectly stimulated the development of Greek philosophy (including the conception of immanence) in later years; just as the philosophic defects of Ṛig-Vedic Polytheism may have led to the speculations of the Upanishads.[2]

*The Temple-Cults.* Besides mythology, the other chief element in the popular religion of Greece was the ritual and worship of the temples, which included the cults of many divinities and demons unknown to the 'Olympian' theology of the poets. Behind these lesser godlings we can trace a shifting background of mythology, and occasional semi-philosophic ideas, some of which present a certain affinity with immanence, though

[1] Adam, op. cit., p. 56. [2] See above, p. 18.

they were not usually worked out into any consistent philosophic system. For instance, it is assumed generally that there is a human 'soul' (ψυχή) dwelling in the human body; but this indwelling is regarded, not as essential, but as temporary, and indeed almost unnatural. The body (σῶμα) is the tomb (σῆμα) of the soul, and the soul's salvation is to be found in release from this tomb.[1] But this idea belongs to the realm of Animism, rather than Immanentism, and does not necessarily lead on to the wider conception of essential Divine immanence in man or in the world at large.

In many of the later Greek cults, such as the Mysteries of Eleusis, great emphasis was laid upon the importance of religious ritual and sacramental ceremonies; and it was taught that in these rites, or in the elements used therein, a supernatural power is immanent, in a quasi-material manner, so that it can be conveyed by them to the worshipper, just as water is conveyed by a material channel.[2] But all this again, while akin to some forms of Sacramentalism, need not necessarily imply a general conception of Divine immanence in the world at large.

So far we have found but little in Greek thought that bears directly upon our study of Divine indwelling. But when we turn to its later and more advanced forms, we shall find that these have some notable contributions to offer.

### C. The Philosophic Tradition of Greece

The long roll of Greek philosophers extends from the sixth century B.C. to the sixth century A.D. Many of them dealt at length with the idea of Divine immanence, and the problems which it involves. In this connexion, we may consider them under several groups.

#### *The Materialistic Monists of the sixth century B.C.*

The earliest Greek thinkers of whom we have any knowledge were a group of philosophers of the sixth century B.C., living in Asia Minor, and commonly known as the Ionians or Milesians. They asked the question: 'What is the original "stuff" of the world, and the nature of the Reality behind it?' Their answer was,

[1] See Adam, op. cit., p. 98; or L. R. Farnell, in *E.R.E.*, Vol. VI, p. 408, Art. 'Greek Religion'.

[2] Cf. Pringle-Pattison, op. cit., p. 217.

that it was some physical substance. As to what this substance was, they differed among themselves; but they all agreed that it was something material, probably of a gaseous or liquid nature, such as air, fire, or water, rather than a solid.

Thales maintained that behind the world lies an elementary moisture, out of which everything has been made; Anaximander taught that the primary 'stuff' of the world is an Infinite Substance; and Anaximenes spoke of this primary substance as Air (ἀήρ or πνεῦμα).[1] So all three might be described as Materialistic Monists.

Some of their successors postulated more than one 'world-ground', and might therefore be called Materialistic Pluralists. In the fifth century, Leucippus and Democritus thought that the universe was founded upon an infinite number of material atoms; thus anticipating some of the theories associated with modern scientific Materialism.[2]

All these, whether Monists or Pluralists, offer some points of contact with Immanentism, in so far as they hold that behind the visible Reality and tangible phenomena of the world, there is one (or more than one) primary Substance or Reality which, while itself more or less material in its nature, is yet sufficiently distinct from the various material phenomena to be regarded as underlying them, or even indwelling them. Human thought did not at this stage distinguish clearly between 'the spiritual' and 'the material'; and when it tried to express the idea of a single invisible Reality underlying the various material phenomena of the world, it found it natural to conceive of this as some attenuated or intangible form of matter. We may view such theories with interest and sympathy, as 'pioneer attempts' to solve the great philosophical problem of the relation of the many phenomena of life to its underlying Unity; and indeed they are in many ways more scientific in principle than the naïve theories of creation put forward by primitive types of religion. But they were not ultimately endorsed, either by science or religion. They either faded away into Pantheism or Scepticism

[1] For Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes, see, e.g., Adam, op. cit., pp. 185–8; or J. Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, London, 1914, Pt. I, Chap. i.

[2] For Leucippus and Democritus, see Burnet, op. cit., Chaps. vi and xi. See also below, p. 70, for Empedocles.

(neither of which left any place for the idea of Divine immanence) or else they were replaced by another line of thought, which found the seat of Reality or World-Unity in Mind rather than in matter.

*The Reaction Against Materialism: Heraclitus, etc.*

In the fifth century B.C., we find a number of philosophers who stand midway, as it were, between the Materialism of the Ionians and the Spiritual Idealism of Plato and his successors. First among these is Heraclitus. In some respects he was a Material Monist. He taught that 'All is Flux' (*πάντα ῥεῖ*); i.e., all things are continually changing into their opposites. These, however, are only different manifestations of the one underlying Principle, which he calls 'Fire', and which he identifies with God. Hence he has been called a Hylozoist, or even an Atheist, because he makes God subject to change, like Fire. But he also strikes a note which foreshadows later and more spiritual ideas, affirming that God is not only Pure Fire, but also Eternal Wisdom,[1] and thus shifting the centre of Reality from matter to mind. Again, his theory of the *Logos* (Word or Reason) which is the cause of all that happens, and speaks to the heart of man, led Justin Martyr to claim Heraclitus as 'a Christian before Christ'.[2] It would, however, be a mistake to 'read into' Heraclitus the Christian conception of the Logos as a Person within the Godhead. Nevertheless, in spite of his wavering between material and spiritual metaphors, we cannot but see in him a forerunner of later philosophies, both Idealistic and Monistic, in which the idea of Divine immanence holds an essential place.

A little later than Heraclitus, Parmenides carries on the materialistic traditions of the Ionians, teaching that 'That which Is' (Τό *'όν*) is a finite, solid, unchangeable Totality. The idea of Divine indwelling can have no place in a thorough-going Materialism of this type; nor in the vague and colourless Pantheism of Hippocrates, who is reputed to have said: 'All things are alike, and all are divine.'[3] Most of the Sophists[4] were either Pantheists of this type, or else pure Agnostics or Humanists.

[1] Burnet, op. cit., p. 62. [2] Adam, op. cit., pp. 217, 240.

[3] For Parmenides and Hippocrates, see Burnet, p. 68 and p. 33; or Adam, p. 241. [4] For the Sophists, see Adam, pp. 265 ff.

There were also other philosophers of the fifth century B.C. whose views mark the transition from the Materialism of the Ionians to the Idealism of the Platonists. Among these was Xenophanes (d. *c.* 480 B.C.), who found the 'many gods' of mythology unsatisfying, and urged men to believe rather in 'one God, the greatest among gods and men', but 'like mortals neither in form nor thought', who rules the world 'by the thought of His mind'.[1]

Towards the middle of the fifth century, Anaxagoras and Empedocles hover between interpretations of the ultimate Reality in terms of matter or of mind;[2] but the trend of thought on the whole was in the direction of the latter. Sophocles, too, when he asks: 'If there is unity of purpose in the world, must there not also be unity of power?'[3] illustrates the same turning-away from the idea of a material world-ground to a conception of Reality which needs for its description such terms as 'soul', 'spirit', 'mind', 'purpose'. Moreover, some of these terms, which in primitive usage had suggested little more than 'attenuated matter', were now acquiring a significance more akin to that which now we attach to the word 'spiritual', and came to lend themselves more readily to the conception of the indwelling of God, conceived as a 'Spirit', in the world.

A little earlier, Pythagoras (*c.* 530 B.C.) expounding his doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls, uses language which has affinities both with the older Materialism and later theories of an immanent 'World-Soul':

> There is a unity of all living things. Gods, men, animals form one community, animated by a single principle of life, which can pass from one to another. . . . Man can become divine, because the life within him is a spark of the divine Fire irradiating the universe.[4]

[1] See Adam, op. cit., p. 198.

[2] For Anaxagoras and Empedocles, see Adam, op. cit., pp. 256 ff. and pp. 244 ff., or Burnet, op. cit., Chap. iv. Empedocles, while maintaining that there are four 'roots of being' in the world (fire, earth, air and water) also affirmed that God is Mind (νοῦς).

[3] Adam, pp. 348–50.

[4] Quoted by F. M. Cornford in *Before and After Socrates*, Cambridge, 1932, pp. 69, 70.

In this passage, in spite of the material metaphor of fire, the thought as a whole seems to be on the very threshold of a definite conception of the indwelling of God in the world of life.

*Socrates, Plato, Aristotle: 'The Immanence of Mind'*

The tendency, already noted, to replace the thought of Reality as Matter by that of Reality as Mind, reaches its goal in the three great philosophers of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. They are not pure Monists, for they recognize the reality and independence of matter, side by side with Mind; but it is in the latter that they find the ultimate 'world-ground'.

*Socrates* (469–399 B.C.). The teaching of Socrates is known to us only at second-hand, chiefly through his disciple, Plato; but its main features stand out clearly enough. Central among these is the supremacy of Mind over matter. Man, instead of being viewed (as in Homer) primarily as a body possessing a spirit (ψυχή), is regarded primarily as mind (νοῦς) using a body.[1] Similarly, God, the Supreme, is essentially Mind; and His relation to the world is viewed primarily as a rational, rather than as a material, process. In Nature there is an indwelling Intelligence, 'invisible, omnipresent, omniscient, omnibenevolent.'[2] At the same time, this Intelligence is to be found operative in fuller measure in the mind of man than in the lower forms of life or in inanimate matter. For instance, the Voice which guided Socrates spoke (and in a sense indwelt) in Socrates' mind.[3] It is to Socrates also that the world probably owes the beginning of the Theory of Forms or Ideas, which is specially associated with the name of Plato;[4] and the breach

[1] See E. Caird, *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, Vol. I, Glasgow, 1904, p. 65.

[2] Adam, pp. 348–50. [3] See Adam, p. 320; Burnet, p. 29 f.

[4] For the 'Forms', see Burnet, pp. 154 ff. English translators and expositors of Plato have traditionally spoken of the Theory of 'Ideas', but some modern writers prefer to speak of 'Forms', in order to avoid certain associations of the English word 'idea'; but 'Form' and 'Idea' are used to translate the same Greek word (εἶδος), which is the word commonly used by Plato, though he also, but less frequently, uses the word ἰδέα. How far the theory is due to Socrates, and how far to Plato, is still a matter of dispute among scholars. See below, p. 72.

with Materialism, of which Socrates was the first great prophet in the tradition of Greece, was developed further by Plato.

*Plato* (427–347 B.C.). It has been said of Plato that he 'did more than any one before or since to open up all the questions with which the philosophy of religion has to deal';[1] and among these we must include the problems of Divine immanence. His mind was comprehensive rather than relentlessly logical, and he left many problems unsolved; but he was decisive in his rejection of Materialism as an adequate explanation of the world.[2]

*Plato's Theory of Ideas.* The most famous element in Plato's teaching is his Theory of Ideas. According to this theory, it is only the 'Forms' or 'Ideas', apprehended by reason and not by sense, that possess ultimate and complete Reality. The phenomena that we can see and touch possess Reality only in so far as they participate in the Ideas of which each object of sense is a copy; the Ideas being partly, but not wholly, expressed in their phenomena. In other words, the Ideas are both transcendent above the phenomena and also immanent in them.[3] The Ideas themselves are unified under the Idea of the Good, which is the highest of all, and is described in the *Republic* as the Source of Being and of Knowledge, just as the sun is the source of life and growth in the world of sense.[4] It is in this 'Idea of the Good' that the Theory approaches nearest to a conception of God as Supreme Spirit and Source of all things. All through subsequent history, theories akin to Plato's Theory of Ideas have continued to hold an important place in human thought. Those who have a passion for logical completeness have generally preferred a thorough-going type of Monism; but a 'Platonic' philosophy

[1] Caird, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 259.

[2] Cf. P. Shorey, in *E.R.E.*, Vol. IX, p. 861b, Art. 'Philosophy, Greek'.

[3] For a fuller account of the Theory of Ideas, see, e.g., Caird, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 80–197; or Adam, op. cit., pp. 422–60. The central thought is finely expressed in the closing words of the *Timaeus*, in which the universe is described 'as the image of the intelligible (εἰκὼν τοῦ νοητοῦ), a god displayed to sense, the one only-begotten heaven'.

[4] *Republic*, Book VI; see also R. L. Nettleship's *Lectures on the Republic of Plato*, ed. by Lord Charnwood, London, 1914, p. 236.

has generally been found to afford the best framework within which to find scope for the conceptions both of Transcendence and Immanence.

*Plato's 'World-Soul'.* The world, according to Plato, is created by God, and is animated by the 'World-Soul', which is organically one with all life, and includes all other souls, those of animals, and particularly those of men.[1] In the *Timaeus*, he teaches that in every human soul, there is an element of the Divine.[2]

Yet although Plato is constantly endeavouring to reach a principle of Unity, his system of thought is not truly monistic. For the other souls have a real, though subordinate, existence; God is the 'Best Soul', but not 'the All';[3] also, matter is distinct from the World-Soul, and is not included in its unity.[4] Further, the creation of the world was effected by a conscious act of will on the part of God, so that there is an essential Dualism between matter and the Self-Moving Creator,—which marks Plato as definitely theistic.[5] There is a further touch of Dualism—in this case a *moral* Dualism—in Plato's teaching that God is essentially *good*, and therefore separate from Evil.[6]

*The influence of Plato on later ages.* Plato's philosophy, as we have said, leaves many questions unanswered. It lacks the magnificent consistency of Śaṅkara, or of Monism in general, whether materialistic or spiritual. But it has exercised an almost unique influence on human thought, by reason of its wide range, and its contact with the many aspects and values of life. So we find a long line of philosophers who look back to Plato as their greatest Teacher in the early centuries of the Church:—the Neo-Platonists, the Christian Alexandrians, and

[1] Interpreters of Plato differ as to whether the World-Soul is identical with God, or is itself a creature of God. See C. Ritter, *The Essence of Plato's Philosophy*, London, 1933, p. 281.

[2] Adam, op. cit., p. 377; pp. 366–71.

[3] See A. E. Taylor, *Plato*, London, 1926, pp. 489 ff.

[4] See Taylor, op. cit., p. 492. Indeed at times Plato seems to verge towards Deism, when he speaks of the Creator 'resting' after creation, and 'withdrawing from the world that He has made'.—Adam, op. cit., p. 371.

[5] Caird, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 196.

[6] See Pringle-Pattison, op. cit., p. 93.

Augustine, the 'Cambridge Platonists' of the seventeenth century, and many of the ablest thinkers of modern times. One element in Plato's teaching which specially harmonizes with modern theories of evolution, is his conception of 'graded immanence'; i.e., the idea that while God is to some extent dwelling in all the phenomena of life, the 'intensity' of His immanence is not the same throughout, but becomes greater as we ascend in the scale of life, and has so far reached its highest degree in man.

> The Supreme Principle . . . manifests itself in every element and part of the Universe. . . . But in a higher sense it reveals itself only in the individual souls who partake in its immortality.[1]

It is only in some such way as this that the idea of Divine immanence can be harmonized with a safeguarding of the *values* of life; and it is Plato who first among western thinkers indicates how this may be done. So we find that wherever the idea of immanence is presented as containing religious and moral values (and not merely as a philosophic conception) it is more or less under the influence of the Platonic tradition.

*Aristotle* (384–322 B.C.). In Aristotle, the last of the 'great trio' of Greek philosophers, the idea of God has moved even further away from that of the Materialists; so far away, indeed, that Divine immanence in the material world almost disappears. Aristotle scarcely admits any essential unity between God and things material. For although he speaks of God as 'Eternal Substance', he generally presents Him as the antithesis, rather than the One Ground, of the things that we see.[2] It follows that all physical activity in God is dismissed as an unworthy idea; and consequently also any idea of Divine immanence; except possibly in the sense of Active Reason (νοῦς ποιητικός) in human minds, or as the mind of a military general may be said to be 'present' in his army through his commands which take effect there.[3]

Aristotle has indeed a remarkable insight into the principle of evolution working through Nature, and regards this as an

[1] Caird, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 223.

[2] W. D. Ross, *Aristotle*, Vol. I, p. cxxxii; or Caird, Vol. II, pp. 8, 10.

[3] Caird, Vol. II, p. 18; Ross, pp. cxliii–cxlviii, cl; also pp. 148–53.

'upward effort' towards God; but (except in the above-mentioned analogy between God and the leader of an army) he does not suggest that this is due to the working therein of an immanent Divine principle. Generally speaking, if Aristotle's God is in any way operative in the world, the method of this is not akin to conscious activity, but rather to the unconscious influence of one person on another, or of a statue or picture on its admirer.[1]

In the post-Aristotelian philosophies, Stoicism and Epicureanism, we find a reversion to Monism—at times spiritual, and at other times material—neither of these being fully in the line of the Platonic tradition. But later on, the Neo-Platonists[2] again took up, and discussed further, the problem of the Absolute God, and His relation to the world, along lines which follow in many ways from Aristotle as well as from Plato.

*The Stoics.* After Aristotle, the leading school of philosophy in the west for some centuries was the Stoic, which was founded about the close of the fourth century B.C., and continued till Marcus Aurelius in the second century A.D. In the Stoic tradition, there are divers elements, not easy to harmonize into a unity.

Among its earlier exponents, including its founder Zeno (b. 336 B.C.), we find much that reminds us of the Materialistic Monism of the Ionians, and especially of Heraclitus. Behind all is an Elemental Fire, which itself is God and First Cause. This Fire is pervaded by the Logos, and converted, first into the Four Elements (earth, fire, air, water), and these in turn into the various orders of living things.[3] All this is simply 'Material Immanentism' revived.

But in later Stoicism, led by teachers such as Seneca (4 B.C.–A.D. 65) and Epictetus (*c.* A.D. 50–130) we find an intellectual Monism, affirming that 'All is Mind', and that Matter can be interpreted as simply the expression of Mind (or Reason), which is the Divine element in man. Mind and Matter are two inseparable (though distinguishable) aspects of beings. So Seneca

[1] See Caird, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 275 ff., or Ross, op. cit., p. cxlix.

[2] See below, p. 77.

[3] See E. V. Arnold, in Hastings' *E.R.E.*, Vol. XI, p. 862, Art. 'Stoics'.

wrote:

> What is God? The sum-total of all thou seest, and canst not see! . . . What is Nature, but God and Reason immanent in the world in all its parts!—*Nat. Q.* II, 45.

Strictly, this might seem to imply a Pantheism which leaves no place for the indwelling of God in the world; but, in practice, the Stoics often spoke of God as the All-pervading; and Cicero is echoing Stoic teaching when he speaks of God as 'extending through the essence of every object' (*pertinens per naturam cujusque rei*).[1]

So do Virgil's lines, in which Anchises explains to Aeneas the relation of the World-Soul to earth and sky:

> Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus
> Mens agitat molem et magno se corpore miscet.
>
> (A Spirit within sustains them; and Mind, infused throughout the several parts, gives energy to the whole mass, and blends itself with the great body.) —*Aen.* VI, 726 f.

Again, the *Hymn of Cleanthes* (from which perhaps St Paul was quoting in Acts xvii, 28),[2] is typically Stoic:

> Blessed be Thou; for on Thee should call all things that are mortal;
> For that we are Thy offspring; nay, all that is myriad motion
> Lives for its day on the earth, bears one impress, Thy likeness, upon it.[3]

Besides the materialistic and monistic elements of Stoicism already referred to, there is a strong ethical note, which adds further to the complexity of the system.

Contemporary with Stoicism was the Epicurean Philosophy; but this, with its unqualified Materialism and its Deistic denial of contact between God and the world,[4] calls for no detailed consideration in a study of Divine indwelling. Apart from Stoicism and Epicureanism, the centuries which followed Aristotle were on the whole barren of constructive thought in the west, till we come to the Neo-Platonists.

[1] *De Natura Deorum*, II, xxvii, 71.

[2] See below, Chap. viii.

[3] From *The Golden Sayings of Epictetus*, trans. H. Crossley. See also Arnold, in *E.R.E.*, Vol. XI, p. 861a.

[4] See R. D. Hicks in *E.R.E.*, Vol. V, p. 326, Art. 'Epicureanism'.

*The Neo-Platonists: Plotinus, Porphyry, etc.*

Although the Neo-Platonists do not fall within the pre-Christian era, they may best be considered in this chapter; for they are closer akin to the old Greek tradition than to any Christian thinkers, though the latter may have influenced them. They were mostly associated with Alexandria, which gradually became the chief centre of Greek philosophic thought after the fall of Athens, when Greece became a Roman province. In the various Alexandrian schools of philosophy, perhaps the most distinctive idea is the desire (which we have already noted in Aristotle) to keep the conception of the Absolute 'unspotted from the world', and at the same time, to retain some thought of Divine influence operative in the world. From this dual motive sprang the theory that there must be some kind of *intermediary* power or powers, between the Supreme and the world of phenomena; an idea which recurs again and again in the Neo-Platonist philosophy. Forerunners of the Neo-Platonists had appeared in the Neo-Pythagoreans, from the first century B.C. onwards,[1] and also in Philo.[2]

The most famous of the Neo-Platonists was Plotinus, (A.D. 204–270), a contemporary of the Christian Platonists of Alexandria, who propounded a complex philosophical system. Plotinus revives Plato's Theory of Ideas: 'There is nothing Yonder that cannot be found Here; and all things Here have a secure abiding place Yonder.'[3] In Plotinus, this conception is further complicated by the postulate of an intermediary between the 'idea' and the phenomenon. For instance, in human nature he places 'soul' midway between spirit and body, while in the Universe he places Mind (νοῦς) between the Absolute (Τό 'Εν) and the World-Soul (ψυχή), which latter in turn creates the world of phenomena.[4] This provides a means by which he can avoid the suggestion of direct contact between the Absolute and the

[1] For the Neo-Pythagoreans, see, e.g., W. R. Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, Vol. I, London, 1923, pp. 82, 399.

[2] See below, pp. 86 ff.

[3] Inge, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 197, and Vol. II, pp. 49, 57.

[4] Inge, Vol. I, pp. 123–55. Similar distinctions had been drawn by the Neo-Pythagoreans, a century or so earlier.

world, or any immediate immanence of the Absolute in the world. The utmost he will allow himself to say is, that the Absolute, though not actually immanent in the life which it originates, 'yet through its very perfection overflows, and its super-abundance produces another than itself.'[1] This 'overflow' is especially into spirits; but Plotinus prefers to say that 'they have communion with the Great Spirit (Νοῦς)', rather than that 'He dwells in them'.[2] Similarly, he says: 'The World-Soul is not in the world; but the world is in it', while 'it directs the world from on high'.[3] Another metaphor that he uses to depict the Divine influence is that of the conductor (Χορηγός) of a Chorus, who, while not in any physical contact with the singers, yet 'impresses' His spirit and power upon them.[4]

By the use of language and metaphors such as these, Plotinus shows himself acutely conscious of the inadequacy of spatial metaphors to describe the mode of the Divine Presence. Of the World-Soul, he says: 'Without having any extension, it is present in all extension.'[5] From this it is evident that he rejects any kind of Materialistic Monism; and indeed he is not a Monist, even in the realm of Spirit, for he holds that the world is not *essential* to the Absolute.[6] But in dealing with the question, 'How can the Many have come from the One?' he veils the problem rather than solves it, by his theory of intermediary grades of being between the Absolute and the phenomena of life.[7]

Plotinus recognizes in Beauty a revelation of the Ideal; but even here he is cautious in admitting Divine indwelling in any material form.[8] In his dying words, he speaks as mystic more than as philosopher: 'That which is divine in me departs to unite itself with the Divine in the Universe.'[9]

Among the later Neo-Platonists, we find on the whole a continuation of similar ideas. Thus, Porphyry (A.D. 233–302) again repudiates the material conception of immanence: 'The

[1] Caird, Vol. II, p. 261. [2] Inge, Vol. II, p. 82.
[3] Inge, Vol. I, pp. 205, 210. [4] Caird, Vol. II, p. 224.
[5] Caird, Vol. II, p. 278; cf. T. Whittaker, *The Neo-Platonists*, Cambridge, 1918, p. 56; and Inge, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 124–399.
[6] Inge, Vol. II, p. 121. [7] Inge, Vol. II, p. 119 f.
[8] Caird, Vol. II, pp. 348–9. [9] Inge, Vol. I, p. 121.

world is spatial; God is not.'[1] And Proclus (A.D. 410–85) finds immanence in the Divine purpose, which manifests itself through the evolutionary process in the world, which exists eternally, alongside the One.[2]

The Academy at Athens, the last refuge of the Neo-Platonists, was suppressed in A.D. 529 by order of the Emperor Justinian, after a continuous existence of more than 900 years since its foundation by Plato. After this, Greek philosophy ceased to make any independent contribution to the development of thought in the west, and became partly absorbed in and partly replaced by the doctrinal system of the Christian Church.

## CONCLUSION

### *The Points of Contact between Greek and Oriental Thought with regard to the Divine Indwelling*

No one can study both Greek and Indian philosophy without being struck by the points of resemblance; for in many respects the two seem to stand together, in contrast with the 'Religions of Transcendence'. We may note especially two points, which are closely related to the subject of our study.

In the first place, an underlying tendency to Monism or Pantheism constantly reasserts itself both in Greek and Indian philosophy, and generally seems to hold in check the occasional movements towards Theism. 'No Greek philosopher', says Flint, 'thought of God as truly creative.'[3] In moderation (as we find it in the Platonic tradition) this tendency is favourable to the idea of Divine indwelling; but in its extremer pantheistic forms, whether Greek or Indian, it ends by leaving no place for either Immanence or Transcendence.

Another central idea common to Indian and Greek thought is the essential kinship of God and man. We find this in Greece as far back as the sixth century B.C., in the Orphic cults, and also in Pindar, who says: 'One is the race of men and gods.'[4] Later on, in the 'Hermetic Literature', we meet with

[1] Cf. Whittaker, op. cit., p. 111.

[2] Ibid., pp. 212–36.

[3] R. Flint, *Anti-Theistic Theories*, London, 1906, p. 542. For the similar tendency in Hindu thought, see above, p. 60.

[4] See Adam, op. cit., pp. 98–114.

the formula of address to God: 'I am Thou, and Thou art I' (Ἐγὼ εἰμι σύ, καὶ σύ ἐγώ),[1] which at once reminds us of the famous *Tat Tvam Asi* of the Upanishads, and indeed may have been derived from Oriental sources. In this case also, the idea of Divine indwelling in man becomes logically eliminated if the idea of unity is pressed into that of identity.

But while these and other points of contact do probably indicate in some cases a definite 'borrowing of ideas', it is not always easy to determine on which side the borrowing took place. Some of the resemblances may be due simply to a parallel development of thought, and to the essential unity of the human mind all over the world.

*The Permanent Influence of Greek Philosophy on the Subject of our Study*

Although the continuous tradition of Greek philosophy comes to a close with the Neo-Platonists, the Platonic tradition (as we have already noted) has constantly tended to emerge again in western thought. Sometimes this has been in forms that have been denounced by the Church as heretical—as in the teaching of Scotus Erigena in the ninth century A.D., or Giordano Bruno in the sixteenth century.[2] But Platonic ideas have also been largely absorbed into Christian thought. Dean Inge even speaks of Platonism as 'part of the vital structure of Christian theology',[3] and certainly the doctrinal terminology of some of the chief historic creeds of the Church has been based upon Greek metaphysics.

Even apart from the influence of Greek thought upon Christian theology, Greek philosophy cannot be ignored in any study of Divine Immanence; for the various aspects of the idea, and the many problems which it raises, have never been more clearly envisaged or more carefully discussed than by the thinkers of Ancient Greece.

[1] See Farnell in Hastings' *E.R.E.*, Vol. VI, p. 423, Art. 'Greek Religion'; and for the Hermetic Literature, see St George Stock, also in *E.R.E.*, Vol. VI, pp. 626–9, Art. 'Hermes Trismegistus'.

[2] See below, Chap. ix. [3] op. cit., Vol. I, p. 12.

# CHAPTER VI

## THE RELIGIONS OF TRANSCENDENCE

IN the previous chapters we have traced the steps by which primitive Polytheism, whether of the East or of the West, became unified into a philosophic Monism. We must now turn back again to earlier times, and follow another line of thought, which also seems to have sprung out of primitive Polytheism, but in this case resulted in the great 'transcendentalist' religions—Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Islam. These all grew up in the area lying between India and Europe; and in all these, the consciousness of *difference*—the difference between Good and evil, between Creator and created, between Heaven and earth—outweighs the desire for an all-inclusive Unity.

### A. JUDAISM

The Religion of the Jews, though its adherents have always been few in number compared with those of other world-religions, possesses a peculiar importance, partly intrinsic, and partly because of its organic connexion with Christianity; and the Old Testament, containing as it does the record of the history and the expression of this faith, is a volume of unique significance and interest.

The Semitic background out of which the Old Testament sprang was polytheistic, or rather animistic. The gods of the early Semites were less majestic and also less personal than the gods of Homer or the Ṛig-Veda, and indeed were little more than 'spirits'.

> The primitive Semites . . . had a very strong sense of the supernatural. To them every striking natural object seemed to conceal the presence of a supernatural being. . . . The object itself was called *beth-el* ['abode of god'] . . . The deity was supposed to 'inhabit' the sacred tree or stone, not in the sense in which a man inhabits a house, but in the sense in which his soul inhabits his body.[1]

[1] R. L. Ottley, *The Religion of Israel*, Cambridge, 1905, p. 9 ; cf. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 2nd ed., London, 1894, p. 85.

*The Predominant Transcendentalism of the Old Testament*

It might well have happened that Semitic Polytheism would have developed into a philosophy of immanence, by a gradual enlargement of the idea of God along lines such as were followed in India and Greece. But, in fact, the Religion of the Hebrews took another line. The first leaders of the Hebrew National Movement, such as Moses and Joshua, gave the people an emphatic command 'to put away the gods which their fathers had served'.[1] Animism and Polytheism were rejected as puerile and immoral; and in their place was set the idea of One God, personal and national, yet also supra-personal and supra-national, for He is 'up in Heaven', above all men and all nations, which are His creation. It is true that naïve ideas of God as a 'glorified man' still survive in the Old Testament, and occasionally come to the surface;[2] but the general trend of its teaching is towards a lofty conception of a transcendent God, holy and separate from the world and man.[3] The relation of this God to the world is that of Creator from without, by command; 'He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.'[4] The universe does indeed reflect His wisdom and glory;[5] but the Divine Artist has now finished His work, and dwells in sovereign supremacy in Heaven. There is no suggestion that He remains in 'organic unity' with His creation; and though He can, and does, visit the earth at will, it stands apart from Him, as His handiwork, not a part of Him as His body, nor even as His permanent shrine. Similarly, with regard to the relation between God and man, the main stress of Old Testament teaching lies upon the contrast between the two:

[1] Josh. xxiv, 14; cf. Deut. xxxii, 12. The Old Testament quotations are from the Revised Version, except where otherwise stated.

[2] E.g., Gen. iii, 8; vi, 6; xi, 5; Ex. xv, 3.

[3] The term 'holy' (*kodesh*), which is so frequently applied to God in the Old Testament, there seems to imply primarily 'set apart' for God's use, and hence separate from the earth and human sins, and morally righteous; but it does not necessarily connote the idea of 'numinousness', with which it has been associated by Otto, and by many modern writers.

[4] Psalm xxxiii, 9; cf. the Creation-narrative in Gen. i.

[5] Psalm xix, 1; Job xxxviii, xxxix, etc.

> For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.[1]

Such passages emphasize the immeasurable transcendence of God above the ordinary life of the world and of man.

*The Doctrine of Divine Indwelling in the Old Testament*

At the same time, the Old Testament also teaches that Jehovah, the God of Heaven, is to some extent an indwelling God. This is implied in several of the fundamental ideas of the Old Testament.

(*a*) *The presence of God in the midst of His chosen people.* The Old Testament frequently affirms this,[2] and especially His presence in the Temples where He 'sits upon' or 'dwells between' the cherubim.[3] Nevertheless, this local presence of God is exceptional, rather than normal. It is a matter for reverent wonder, and a proof of God's peculiar relation to His chosen people.[4] It is not presented as an integral part of God's universal indwelling in the world, but as something supernatural and unique. It is the presence of a Visitor, not of a Soul.

(*b*) *The companionship of God with His saints.* This is another frequent theme of Hebrew prophet and psalmist, and brings us a step nearer to the thought of Divine indwelling. It has an affinity with the mystical 'awareness of God' which delights to discover Him everywhere in the world, and perhaps a still deeper affinity with the mystic's consciousness of spiritual union with God in his own soul. Yet the language of the Old Testament on this subject is carefully guarded; for it generally describes Jehovah as dwelling 'with' or 'near' His worshipper, rather than 'within' him;[5] in other words, as the Unseen Companion, rather than as the Indweller.

(*c*) *Divine inspiration.* Occasionally the Old Testament

[1] Isa. lv, 8, 9.

[2] Ex. xxix, 45; Lev. xxvi, 12, etc.

[3] 2 Kings xix, 15; Psalm lxxx, 1, etc.; cf. J. T. Marshall, in Hastings' *D.B.*, Vol. IV, Art. 'Shekinah'.

[4] Cf. the note of *surprise* in 1 Kings viii, 27: 'Will God in very deed dwell on the earth?'

[5] See, e.g., Psalm lxxiii, 23; cxlv, 18; etc.

writers go beyond this, and use metaphors more directly suggestive of Divine indwelling within the world and man; but even in such cases they generally describe 'that which indwells' as the 'breath' or 'spirit' (*ruach*) of God, rather than simply as 'God'; —perhaps in order to soften the suggestion of direct contact between the Creator and His creatures:

> Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created;
> And thou renewest the face of the ground.
> —Psalm civ, 30; cf. Gen. ii, 7, Ezek. xxxvii, 9.

To men, the Divine in-breathing brings wisdom and light:

> The breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding.
> —Job xxxii, 8.
>
> The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord.
> —Proverbs xx, 27.[1]

Such passages as these certainly bring us near to the thought of universal Divine indwelling in the world. But the thought is not developed further in the Old Testament as a whole; and these passages remain exceptional. It is only very rarely that we meet with anything that could be construed as an unequivocal assertion of God's universal indwelling in the world. In one passage, Jeremiah does indeed appear to affirm this:

> Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord. —Jer. xxiii, 24.

But in view of the general trend of Hebrew thought, this should probably be interpreted as expressing the belief that God is Omnipresent as the inescapable Companion, rather than as the essential Indweller; even as one of the Psalmists beautifully expressed it:

> Whither shall I go from thy spirit?
> Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
> If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:
> If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.
> —Psalm cxxxix, 7, 8.

[1] It is interesting to note that the Old Testament itself rarely uses the metaphor of in-breathing (inspiration) to describe the source of the message given to the prophets; and where it is used, the Divine Spirit is described as coming 'upon', rather than 'into', the prophet (Isa. lxi, 1; Joel ii, 28 f., etc.).

It is not always possible to draw a clear line between the idea of an omnipresent Person and that of an indwelling Presence; but in the Old Testament there can be little doubt that the former conception is the dominant one; and, though it brings us very near to the idea of Divine indwelling, still stops short of it.

Another important characteristic of the Old Testament conception of the Presence of God is the strong moral note associated with it; and this decisively limits the universality of the Divine indwelling, in such a way that it can never be regarded as something which necessarily pervades all the world, or all mankind. It is indeed the natural expression of the Divine graciousness, and to this extent it is 'essential'; but it is also a voluntary expression of His goodwill towards His creatures; and, because He is a righteous God, he will grant His Presence in full measure only to righteous and humble souls.

> For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.
>
> —Isa. lvii, 15; cf. Psalm xv, 1, etc.

To the wicked, indeed, the Presence of God brings no gratification, but rather fear and dismay.[1] Only to the devout soul does it bring the peace and joy that passeth understanding. Of this peace and joy the old Hebrew saints have written in words which entitle them to be reckoned among the greatest witnesses to the experience of Divine indwelling in the human soul.

> . . . I am continually with thee:
> Thou hast holden my right hand.
> Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,
> And afterward receive me to glory.
>
> —Psalm lxxiii, 23, 24.

*The Judaism of the Dispersion, and Philo of Alexandria*

Even within the borders of Judaism, however, the idea of essential Divine immanence in all the world is not altogether absent, though it is not to be found within the Canonical Books of the Old Testament Scriptures, nor geographically within the Holy Land itself. But from the third century B.C. onwards, the

[1] Amos v, 18, etc.

Jews were widely scattered into foreign lands; and this dispersion led to the growth of a new, and in many ways more liberal, type of Jewish thought. At Alexandria, in particular, the 'colonial' Jews residing there attempted to combine their traditional veneration for the Old Testament with many of the ideas of Greek philosophy. The result was a type of Jewish thought in which a doctrine of Divine immanence, akin to that which is found in Greek philosophy, was taught within the Jewish community. Illustrations of this may be found in the books of the Apocrypha, particularly in the Wisdom of Solomon. and also in the book known as the Sibylline Oracles.[1] In these books, the indwelling of God in the world is described under physical metaphors, as something essential and inherent in the nature of things:

> The spirit of the Lord hath filled the world.
> —Wisdom of Solomon i, 7.
>
> Thine incorruptible spirit is in all things.
> —Wisdom of Solomon xii, 1.
>
> . . . Wisdom is more mobile than any motion;
> Yea, she pervadeth and penetrateth all things. . . .
> For she is a breath of the power of God.
> —Wisdom of Solomon vii, 24, 25.
>
> God is indwelling in all men.—Sibylline Oracles iii.

Such passages are far more Greek than Hebrew in their spirit; and yet the writers were in many respects typical Jews, notably in their horror of the idolatrous practices which in other religions often accompany the belief in Divine immanence.[2] The writer of Wisdom also teaches that human souls exist both before their earthly birth and after their earthly death; so that they are (as it were) 'temporarily immanent' in material bodies.[3] This idea has obvious affinity with Hindu and Greek ideas of the transmigration of souls, of which there is no trace in the Canonical Old Testament.

[1] The older parts of the Sibylline Oracles probably date from the second century B.C. (See Rendel Harris, in Hastings' *D.B.*, Extra Vol., p. 68.) The Wisdom of Solomon has been assigned to various dates between 150 B.C. and A.D. 40. (See C. Siegfried, in Hastings' *D.B.*, Vol. IV, p. 930a.)

[2] See, e.g., Wisdom xiv, 12–21. [3] Wisdom viii, 15 f.; cf. iii, 1–5.

The best known exponent of Alexandrian Judaism was Philo, an elder contemporary of Jesus Christ. He was anxious to be loyal to his Hebrew tradition, and at the same time was imbued with the type of Greek philosophy which was known later on as Neo-Platonism.[1] But how could he reconcile his Jewish faith in Jehovah as a personal God with his philosophic idea of the Absolute? Jehovah, as we have seen, not only governs the general course of history, but occasionally intervenes directly in it, by a free miraculous act. On the other hand, the Absolute (according to Philo) 'remains unchangeable, requiring nothing at all, so that all things belong to Him, but He, strictly speaking, belongs to nothing'.[2] At the same time, Philo also believes in a Divine 'Soul of the World',[3] which is in some sense within the world. Now these various ideas were not easy to harmonize together. So, in order to avoid any suggestion of direct contact between the Absolute and the created world, Philo introduces the idea of an intermediate order of 'Divine Powers', of which the chief is the 'Word' (*Logos*); and he affirms that it is only through the Logos that the Supreme comes into contact with the world. Thus it is only in a very limited and guarded way that Philo admits any Divine immanence in the world; and he carefully avoids the use of the similes of 'substance' or extension in space. God (he says) is not essentially self-manifesting in the world; but through the Logos He makes His power to be felt there, as a man using a seal can cause his impress to be made upon the paper without actually touching it.[4] Even the Logos remains 'outside creation in his essence, but in all things by his power'.[5] By means of such phrases and illustrations, Philo endeavours to bridge the gulf between the Absolute and the world. It cannot however be said that his efforts were altogether successful; for if the Absolute is really absolute (in the sense of being unlimited by and unrelated to anything else), then the emanation of *any* other being from It is just as unthinkable as the forthcoming of the world from It directly. Philo, however,

[1] See above, pp. 76 ff.
[2] Caird, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 192.
[3] Philo, *De Mundi Opificio*, 23.
[4] See J. Drummond, in Hastings' *D.B.*, Extra Vol., Art. 'Philo'.
[5] Inge, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 98.

writers go beyond this, and use metaphors more directly suggestive of Divine indwelling within the world and man; but even in such cases they generally describe 'that which indwells' as the 'breath' or 'spirit' (*ruach*) of God, rather than simply as 'God'; —perhaps in order to soften the suggestion of direct contact between the Creator and His creatures:

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Such passages as these certainly bring us near to the thought of universal Divine indwelling in the world. But the thought is not developed further in the Old Testament as a whole; and these passages remain exceptional. It is only very rarely that we meet with anything that could be construed as an unequivocal assertion of God's universal indwelling in the world. In one passage, Jeremiah does indeed appear to affirm this:

> Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord. —Jer. xxiii, 24.

But in view of the general trend of Hebrew thought, this should probably be interpreted as expressing the belief that God is Omnipresent as the inescapable Companion, rather than as the essential Indweller; even as one of the Psalmists beautifully expressed it:

> Whither shall I go from thy spirit?
> Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
> If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:
> If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.
> —Psalm cxxxix, 7, 8.

[1] It is interesting to note that the Old Testament itself rarely uses the metaphor of in-breathing (inspiration) to describe the source of the message given to the prophets; and where it is used, the Divine Spirit is described as coming 'upon', rather than 'into', the prophet (Isa. lxi, 1; Joel ii, 28 f., etc.).

It is not always possible to draw a clear line between the idea of an omnipresent Person and that of an indwelling Presence; but in the Old Testament there can be little doubt that the former conception is the dominant one; and, though it brings us very near to the idea of Divine indwelling, still stops short of it.

Another important characteristic of the Old Testament conception of the Presence of God is the strong moral note associated with it; and this decisively limits the universality of the Divine indwelling, in such a way that it can never be regarded as something which necessarily pervades all the world, or all mankind. It is indeed the natural expression of the Divine graciousness, and to this extent it is 'essential'; but it is also a voluntary expression of His goodwill towards His creatures; and, because He is a righteous God, he will grant His Presence in full measure only to righteous and humble souls.

> For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.
>
> —Isa. lvii, 15; cf. Psalm xv, 1, etc.

To the wicked, indeed, the Presence of God brings no gratification, but rather fear and dismay.[1] Only to the devout soul does it bring the peace and joy that passeth understanding. Of this peace and joy the old Hebrew saints have written in words which entitle them to be reckoned among the greatest witnesses to the experience of Divine indwelling in the human soul.

> . . . I am continually with thee:
> Thou hast holden my right hand.
> Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,
> And afterward receive me to glory.
>
> —Psalm lxxiii, 23, 24.

*The Judaism of the Dispersion, and Philo of Alexandria*

Even within the borders of Judaism, however, the idea of essential Divine immanence in all the world is not altogether absent, though it is not to be found within the Canonical Books of the Old Testament Scriptures, nor geographically within the Holy Land itself. But from the third century B.C. onwards, the

[1] Amos v, 18, etc.

Jews were widely scattered into foreign lands; and this dispersion led to the growth of a new, and in many ways more liberal, type of Jewish thought. At Alexandria, in particular, the 'colonial' Jews residing there attempted to combine their traditional veneration for the Old Testament with many of the ideas of Greek philosophy. The result was a type of Jewish thought in which a doctrine of Divine immanence, akin to that which is found in Greek philosophy, was taught within the Jewish community. Illustrations of this may be found in the books of the Apocrypha, particularly in the Wisdom of Solomon. and also in the book known as the Sibylline Oracles.[1] In these books, the indwelling of God in the world is described under physical metaphors, as something essential and inherent in the nature of things:

> The spirit of the Lord hath filled the world.
> —Wisdom of Solomon i, 7.
>
> Thine incorruptible spirit is in all things.
> —Wisdom of Solomon xii, 1.
>
> . . . Wisdom is more mobile than any motion;
> Yea, she pervadeth and penetrateth all things. . . .
> For she is a breath of the power of God.
> —Wisdom of Solomon vii, 24, 25.
>
> God is indwelling in all men.—Sibylline Oracles iii.

Such passages are far more Greek than Hebrew in their spirit; and yet the writers were in many respects typical Jews, notably in their horror of the idolatrous practices which in other religions often accompany the belief in Divine immanence.[2] The writer of Wisdom also teaches that human souls exist both before their earthly birth and after their earthly death; so that they are (as it were) 'temporarily immanent' in material bodies.[3] This idea has obvious affinity with Hindu and Greek ideas of the transmigration of souls, of which there is no trace in the Canonical Old Testament.

[1] The older parts of the Sibylline Oracles probably date from the second century B.C. (See Rendel Harris, in Hastings' *D.B.*, Extra Vol., p. 68.) The Wisdom of Solomon has been assigned to various dates between 150 B.C. and A.D. 40. (See C. Siegfried, in Hastings' *D.B.*, Vol. IV, p. 930a.)

[2] See, e.g., Wisdom xiv, 12–21. [3] Wisdom viii, 15 f.; cf. iii, 1–5.

The best known exponent of Alexandrian Judaism was Philo, an elder contemporary of Jesus Christ. He was anxious to be loyal to his Hebrew tradition, and at the same time was imbued with the type of Greek philosophy which was known later on as Neo-Platonism.[1] But how could he reconcile his Jewish faith in Jehovah as a personal God with his philosophic idea of the Absolute? Jehovah, as we have seen, not only governs the general course of history, but occasionally intervenes directly in it, by a free miraculous act. On the other hand, the Absolute (according to Philo) 'remains unchangeable, requiring nothing at all, so that all things belong to Him, but He, strictly speaking, belongs to nothing'.[2] At the same time, Philo also believes in a Divine 'Soul of the World',[3] which is in some sense within the world. Now these various ideas were not easy to harmonize together. So, in order to avoid any suggestion of direct contact between the Absolute and the created world, Philo introduces the idea of an intermediate order of 'Divine Powers', of which the chief is the 'Word' (*Logos*); and he affirms that it is only through the Logos that the Supreme comes into contact with the world. Thus it is only in a very limited and guarded way that Philo admits any Divine immanence in the world; and he carefully avoids the use of the similes of 'substance' or extension in space. God (he says) is not essentially self-manifesting in the world; but through the Logos He makes His power to be felt there, as a man using a seal can cause his impress to be made upon the paper without actually touching it.[4] Even the Logos remains 'outside creation in his essence, but in all things by his power'.[5] By means of such phrases and illustrations, Philo endeavours to bridge the gulf between the Absolute and the world. It cannot however be said that his efforts were altogether successful; for if the Absolute is really absolute (in the sense of being unlimited by and unrelated to anything else), then the emanation of *any* other being from It is just as unthinkable as the forthcoming of the world from It directly. Philo, however,

[1] See above, pp. 76 ff.
[2] Caird, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 192.
[3] Philo, *De Mundi Opificio*, 23.
[4] See J. Drummond, in Hastings' *D.B.*, Extra Vol., Art. 'Philo'.
[5] Inge, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 98.

more than any other Hebrew known to us, pondered deeply over the problem of transcendence and immanence; and his theory, even if a little hesitant, is interesting, and has had considerable influence on later speculation, both non-Christian and Christian.

After Philo, references to Divine immanence occur from time to time in Jewish writings.[1] Modern exponents of Liberal Judaism are generally anxious to point out that the *nearness* of God is a central conception of Judaism,[2] and that Transcendence does not exclude Immanence.

*Conclusion.* We have seen that the main tradition of the Hebrew religion remains predominantly transcendentalist. The motive of reverence for the Supreme, similar to that which led Śaṅkara to protest '*Neti! Neti!*' (Not so! Not so!) at every attempt to describe Him, led the Jew, along another path, to choose the highest terms that he knew. It is true that Jehovah (or Jahveh—the Name which the devout Hebrew always reverently abstained from pronouncing) is above human words. Yet the Jew felt impelled to try and describe Him in some terms; and since the conception of *Sovereignty* was then generally regarded as the highest term in human speech, God was pictured pre-eminently as the Sovereign Lord, and the King of Majesty. But a sovereign, in those days, was not normally accessible. Between him and his subjects were hosts of courtiers and servants. So later Judaism surrounded Jehovah with hosts of angels and spirits; and this strengthened the note of aloofness in the Hebrew descriptions of God.[3] This aloofness is indeed relieved by frequent acts of gracious condescension; but it does not readily lend itself to the conceptions of indwelling or immanence.

It was left for a Prophet greater than the Old Testament had known so to deepen the idea of God that the Old Testament conviction of His righteousness and holiness, without being in

[1] See, e.g., J. Abelson, *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature*, 1912; also Hirsch's article 'God', in *The Jewish Encyclopædia*, Vol. VI.

[2] A volume of essays on 'Aspects of Judaism and Christianity', edited by G. A. Yates, under the title of *In Spirit and in Truth*, London, 1934, contains essays by Rabbis I. I. Mattuck, H. F. Reinhart, and S. E. Starrels, all illustrating this point of view (pp. 32 f., 41, 57, 158 ff.).

[3] Cf. Ottley, op. cit., p. 185.

the least weakened, could be harmonized with a richer concept of His relationship to man than is to be found in the Religion of the ancient Hebrews.

## B. Zoroastrianism

Somewhere between Judea and India, another great religious system, also with a strong moral and ethical note, sprang from the teaching of the prophet Zoroaster, or Zarathustra, who lived about the tenth century B.C.[1] In Zoroastrianism, even more than in Judaism, the main stress is laid upon God's holiness and transcendence. The attributes of God in Zarathustra's teaching—'Righteous, Almighty, Omniscient, Ultimately Prevalent'—all combine to suggest a God apart and above. He is indeed also described as 'The Father of Good Thought'; but there is no suggestion of any quasi-physical emanation here.[2]

In the Zoroastrian Scriptures (the Avesta) the elements of Nature seem to be objects of devotion,[3] and modern Zoroastrians (Parsees) show great reverence to them, especially to Fire; but they are careful to insist that they do not worship God as 'immanent' in material things:

> The sun, the moon, the stars, the fire, the water—to such things we turn our face, because God has bestowed on them a small spark of His Glory. . . .
>
> We do not worship the fire, but regard it and other great natural phenomena as emblems of Divine Power.[4]

Nor do the Parsees teach that a man should look to God for the gift of indwelling grace in his own soul:

> A Parsee has to believe that for the salvation of his soul he has to look to nobody else, but to himself.[5]

This must not, indeed, be interpreted so rigidly as to exclude

[1] J. H. Moulton, *The Treasure of the Magi*, London, 1917, p. 13. Cf. also his *Early Zoroastrianism*, London, 1913, pp. 18–22. Some writers incline to a later date; e.g., N. Söderblom in his Gifford Lectures, *The Living God*, London, 1933, p. 230.

[2] Moulton, pp. 18, 24, 27.

[3] See, e.g., Moulton, pp. 58–61.

[4] Dadabhai Naoroji, *The Parsi Religion*, London, 1905, pp. 186, 192. Dr Jivanji Modi, quoted in Moulton, p. 205.

all thought of Divine support or guidance;[1] but no encouragement is given to any mystical idea of the indwelling of God in the human heart. So we find that the Religion of Zarathustra contributes little or nothing to the doctrine of Divine immanence, either in Nature or in the human soul.

### C. Islam

The latest in origin, and now the largest in extent, of the three great 'Religions of Transcendence', is Islam which, within its own borders, presents us with remarkable contrasts in its doctrine of God, ranging from an extreme Transcendentalism to an Immanentism which merges into Pantheism, but with its main emphasis upon the former. In the Qur'ān (as in the Old Testament) there are traces of primitive anthropomorphic and animistic ideas about God, and some of these have survived to this day in modern Islam.[2] But the predominant picture of God is that of a Supreme Sovereign or Sultan, self-sufficient in His unity, absolute in His power, separate from His subjects, able to effect His will by a bare command. So the Qur'ān tells us:

> God [Allah] is 'The Lord of the Throne, above what they attribute to Him'.—Sūra xxi, 22.
>
> God does what he pleases.—xxii, 2, etc.
>
> It beseems not God that He should take to Himself a Son (Glory be to Him); when He has decreed a matter, He only says to it 'Be!', and it is.—xix, 35.
>
> No associate has He [God].—vi, 164: cf. iv, 116.
>
> Nothing is a likeness of Him.—xlii, 2.
>
> Say: He, God, is One;
> God is He on whom all depend;
> He begets not, nor is He begotten;
> And none is like Him.—cxii.[3]

[1] Ibid., p. 48, etc.

[2] See S. M. Zwemer, *Influence of Animism on Islam*, New York, 1920; also D. S. Margoliouth in *E.R.E.*, Vol. VIII, Art. 'Muhammad'.

[3] The quotations from the Qur'ān are taken from Maulana Muhammad Ali's *Translation of the Holy Quran*, Lahore, 1928. For the theology of Islam, see Bevan Jones' summary of the Creed of Islam in *The People of the Mosque*, Calcutta, 1932, Chap. i, § 3.

Such affirmations, prompted by reverence for God's majesty, tended to become more and more emphatic, and eventually led to the doctrines of *Mukhālafat* (the difference between God and man), and *Tanzīh* (the removal or transcendence of God over man). The latter—affirming that 'God is different from every created thing; He has removed Himself far from every description which applies to the Creation'—has been styled 'the most characteristic element in the whole Muslim scheme of theology'.[1]

This doctrine, if pushed to its logical extreme, makes God so transcendentally above, and so different from, all else that we know, that He cannot be described except by negations, and comes to be practically 'the Unknowable', creating by command, without any suggestion of contact, and still less of Indwelling.[2] Among all the 'ninety-nine beautiful names' ascribed to God by Islam, there is not one that directly suggests the Divine indwelling in the world or in man.[3]

Thus the extreme Transcendentalism of Islam reaches a negative conception, curiously akin to that which is reached by Śaṅkara through the very different path of Advaita Monism.

*The Mysticism and Pantheism of the Sūfīs.* But while Islam, viewed as a whole, is (as we have seen) the most transcendentalist of all the great world-religions, nevertheless within Islam we find another line of thought, subordinate indeed, but important, and apparently the antithesis of the main type of Islamic teaching. 'It is part of the irony of Muslim theology that the very emphasis on the transcendental Unity should lead thus to Pantheism.'[4] And when Muslim theologians became pantheistic, their relentless logic led them to extremes which have rarely been reached elsewhere, even in the 'religions of immanence'.

The Qur'ān itself offers some authority for this paradoxical element within Islam. For instance, it frequently affirms that God is omnipresent:

[1] D. B. Macdonald, *Aspects of Islam*, New York, 1911, p. 131. Cf. also H. U. W. Stanton, *The Teaching of the Qur'an*, London, 1919, p. 55.

[2] Qur'ān, xix, 33.

[3] See Bevan Jones, op. cit., p. 105, (London edition, p. 101). Cf. Muhammad Ali, op. cit., p. liii, or H. T. Sell, *Studies in Islam*, London, 1928, p. 231 n.

[4] Macdonald, *Muslim Theology*, New York, 1903, p. 233.

> The East and the West is God's; therefore whichever way we turn, there is the face of God.—ii, 115.[1]
>
> We [God] know what man's mind suggests to him; and we are nearer to him than his life-vein.—l, 16; cf. lviii, 7.

Probably God is here felt to be present as All-knower, rather than as Indweller;[2] but still, it is not a long step from such omnipresence to immanence; for if God is 'all around' us, may He not be hiding Himself *within* sky or earth? Further, the Qur'ān lays great emphasis upon the Revelation which God has imparted to His prophets; and while explicitly rejecting the Christian doctrine of the Godhead of Jesus, it refers to him as 'an Apostle of God and His word which He communicated to Mary, and a spirit from Him' (iv, 171). This again brings us very near to the thought of a Divine indwelling in Jesus.

Again, the teaching of the Qur'ān that God's will is absolute so that everything that happens is His act, leads to a kind of Immanentism, or even Monism:

> The absolute, personified Will, from which all things depend, was leading them to Monism, in which nothing but that Will had any existence, and of which the material world was but a passing dream.[3]

So in certain quarters within Islam, the wheel swung round from an extreme Transcendentalism to a Monistic Pantheism closely akin to that of the Vedānta, and to the idea of the world as illusion (*Māyā*).

It was among the sect of the Sūfīs that these tendencies mainly developed. The Sūfīs were primarily mystics, intensely conscious of God in their hearts; and the greatest of the Sūfī teachers were content to supplement the scholastic theology of orthodox Islam with a conception of God's presence in the heart of man, realizing that, without this, vital religion can hardly exist. Notable among these was Al-Ghazzāli (*c.* A.D. 1056–1111); 'perhaps the greatest, certainly the most sympathetic, figure in the history of Islam.'[4] His theology, based on a genuine religious

[1] Rodwell's translation; Muhammad Ali translates, 'Thither is God's purpose.'

[2] See above pp. 3, 4; cf. 'God indeed, encompasses all things in His *knowledge*' (Sūra lxv, 12).

[3] Macdonald, *Aspects of Islam*, p. 143.

[4] Macdonald, *Muslim Theology*, p. 215.

experience and intelligent faith, retaining the fundamental Islamic tenet of God's transcendent Unity, also brings Him into vital touch with human life. God (he says) is 'Single without any similar, Eternal without any opposite, Separate without any like'.[1] But he points out that the Qur'ān itself teaches that 'God breathed into man of His spirit' (xv, 29; xxxviii, 72); so that in virtue of this, the soul of man is different from everything else in the world, for it contains some spark of the Divine, and is restless till it rests again in that primal fire. There is thus a likeness between God and the spirit of man in essence, quality, and actions.[2] Al-Ghazzāli, however, does not seem to extend his conception of Divine indwelling beyond the human soul into the world at large.

But some of the later Sūfīs affirm not only the identity of the Divine and the human; they identify God and the whole world in a thorough-going Monism:

> In solitude . . . one Being was
> Exempt from 'I-'or 'Thou'-ness, and apart
> From all duality. . . .
>
> Each speck of matter did He constitute
> A mirror, causing each one to reflect
> The beauty of His visage. . . .
>
> * * * *
>
> Beware! Say not, He is all-beautiful,
> And we His lovers—Thou art but the glass;
> And He the Face confronting it, which casts
> Its image on the mirror. . . .
> If steadfastly Thou canst regard, Thou wilt at length perceive
> He is the mirror also: He alike
> The Treasure and the Casket. 'I' and 'Thou'
> Have here no place, and are but phantasies
> Vain and unreal.[3]

There is a haunting beauty in these lines, which tells of a genuine mystical experience behind them. But they take us far beyond any intelligible conception of Divine immanence, into a

[1] Macdonald, *Muslim Theology*, p. 301.

[2] Ibid., p. 231 f.

[3] Quoted from the *Yusuf u Zulaikha* of Jami, by R. A. Nicholson in *E.R.E.*, Vol. XII, p. 17a, Art. 'Sufism'.

Pantheism which merges God and the world in identity, and dissolves the apparent 'many-sidedness' of life into Illusion. The terms may be the terms of Islam; but the thought is the thought of the Vedānta.[1]

Similarly, in affirming the Mystical Union between the human soul and God, not all the Sūfīs kept within Al-Ghazzāli's bounds of moderation, and at times express themselves with an extravagance that borders on blasphemy:

> I went from God to God, till they cried in Me
> O Thou I!
> I am God; there is no God except Me; so worship
> Me; Glory to Me; how great is My Majesty![2]

Other Sūfīs adopted the conception of Transmigration of Souls, as a Mystic Way reaching its goal in the absorption of the soul into God. One such, after picturing his successive reincarnations in mineral, plant, animal, man, angel, concludes:

> Once more, I shall wing my way above the angels;
> Thou let me become naught, naught;
> For the harp-string crieth unto me: Verily, unto Him
> do we return![3]

*Bābism.* In one of the modern 'offshoots' of Islam, Bābism (inaugurated about A.D. 1844), a similar ideal of ultimate mystical absorption in God finds expression:

> The country of 'I' and 'We' forsake;
> Thy home in annihilation make;
> Since fearing not this step to take,
> Thou shalt gain the highest felicity.[4]

But, interesting and striking though these Sūfī and Bābī utterances are, they can hardly be regarded as normal expressions of the spirit of Islam. That spirit, like the spirit of the Old

[1] Cf. Nicholson, in an article on 'Sufism' in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1906, p. 315.

[2] Quoted by Nicholson (ibid., p. 326), from the *Tadhkirat-al-Auliva* of Fariduddin 'Attar (tenth century A.D.).

[3] Quoted in Browne, op. cit., p. 332.

[4] From a Bābī poem written in A.D. 1850; quoted by Browne, op. cit., p. 349. For Bābism, see, e.g., Bevan Jones, op. cit., p. 141.

Testament, finds its true genius in expounding the transcendence, rather than the immanence, of God.[1]

[1] We find, however, some modern exponents of Islam anxious to modify the rigidity of the traditional Transcendentalism of Islam, and claiming that the idea of organic evolution through the indwelling power of God in all life is in harmony with true Muslim doctrine. (See Syed Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, Calcutta, 1902, pp. 391 ff. Cf. also M. T. Titus, *Indian Islam*, London, 1930, Chap x, 'The New Muslim Apologetic and Polemic'; esp. p. 215.)

# CHAPTER VII

## THE TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST

WE turn now to a subject which, for Christian readers at any rate, is of central interest: the teaching of Jesus Christ with regard to the indwelling of God.[1]

### A. THE GENERAL BACKGROUND OF CHRIST'S TEACHING

Of the various religious traditions which we have been studying, the only one which is likely to have had any direct influence upon the religious atmosphere in which Jesus Christ was brought up is the Religion of the Hebrews. It is very improbable that the Galilean villagers, or their Rabbis, would be familiar with the speculations of Greek philosophy, and still more improbable that they would even have heard of the Upanishads. They were a people of One Book; and that book was the Old Testament.

[1] In view of divergent estimates of the historical reliability of the sources from which we derive our knowledge of Christ's teaching, it may be well at this point to indicate briefly the position adopted in the following pages. This may be summarized as follows:

(*a*) Of the Synoptic Gospels, St. Mark gives us the earliest and simplest record. St. Matthew and St. Luke, following a similar scheme, are somewhat more inclined to colour their narratives in accordance with doctrinal pre-possessions; but all three Synoptists give us broadly a historical picture of Christ's life and teachings. No claim is made, however, for their inerrancy in every detail.

(*b*) The Fourth Gospel seems to be an 'interpretation', rather than a literal record, of Christ's life and teachings; but it shows a very intimate knowledge of the whole situation implied in the Synoptists. It is difficult to feel certain that the teaching of Jesus as recorded in the Fourth Gospel is in all cases a reproduction of the actual words spoken by Him; but on the other hand, it is impossible to dismiss it as a mere creation of the writer's imagination. As evidence, it has to be weighed both carefully and critically.

(*c*) The other recorded 'Sayings of Jesus' are of varying historical value. Some are obvious legends; others bear marks of genuineness.

The quotations from the New Testament in this chapter are from the Revised Version, except where otherwise stated.

We noted in the preceding chapter that both in the Old Testament, and in the main tradition of Palestinian Judaism, the idea of Divine indwelling held a comparatively small place. The only type of Judaism in which the idea of Divine indwelling held a prominent place at that time was the 'colonial' Judaism of Alexandria;[1] and there is no evidence that Jesus ever came into contact with this. Probably His family, and the village folk among whom He was brought up, were not closely involved in Jewish party politics; but their sympathies would be more with the patriotic and orthodox Pharisees than with the worldly Sadducees, who were regarded by the people as 'hangers-on' of the foreign Roman Government. We may therefore feel fairly sure that both at home and at school, Jesus was taught to think of God in the usual Old Testament way; i.e., as a great Sovereign, who lives up in Heaven, but comes down at times to earth to help devout souls, and intervenes, when He so wills, in the processes of the world. Nor need we doubt that in the home at Nazareth this formal teaching was endorsed by a real, if simple, experience of the presence of God, in harmony with the best traditions of the Hebrew Psalmists and Prophets.

Now the most significant elements in the message of any great teacher are often those in which he breaks away from his traditions, and displays independence of thought and judgement. If therefore we wish to realize the outstanding features of Christ's teaching, we shall need to be able to compare this with the religious tradition in which He was brought up; and if we find in the former any notes which are *distinct* from those which are characteristic of the Old Testament, we may regard these as indicating the most salient points in His own thought and message.

The place which the idea of Divine Immanence occupies in the teaching of Jesus has been very variously estimated by scholars. Dr F. R. Beattie, for instance, in Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, finds 'hints' of Divine Immanence, both in Man and in Nature, in a number of the recorded sayings of Christ, including the Synoptic Gospels.[2] On the other hand,

[1] See above, pp. 85–89.
[2] Vol. I, p. 781b, Art. 'Immanence'.

Dr McGiffert, in Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, says:

> Though Jesus substituted the sense of God's nearness and approachableness for the notion of His remoteness and inaccessibility, the idea of Divine Immanence in the full sense of the word seems to have been far from His thought. At least there is no trace in His recorded utterances of the notion that God is within the world of Nature or physical things.[1]

Such a divergence of estimate may be partly due to the various shades of meaning which may be attached to the term 'immanence'; but in any case it indicates the need for a careful investigation of the subject.

We may now proceed to review the evidence available; turning first to the Synoptic Gospels, and then supplementing their evidence by that of the Fourth Gospel and other early services of information.

## B. The Synoptic Gospels

In the Synoptic Gospels, and especially in St. Mark, there is scarcely any philosophical note in the recorded teachings of Jesus Christ. He is depicted primarily as (1) the Herald of the coming Kingdom of God; (2) the Healer; and (3) the Teacher whose heroic independence of spirit brought upon Him the condemnation of every type of vested interest. But in His parables, and in the whole tenor of His life, as recorded by the Synoptists, we are able to see a fairly clear outline of the 'picture of God' which He painted. In that picture, the element of Divine indwelling holds a place, partly explicit and partly implicit; and to this we must now turn.

*The Old Testament background of thought.* The language of the Synoptic Gospels (both where it simply expresses the mind of the evangelists, and where it records the sayings of our Lord) remains, broadly speaking, that of the Old Testament; and God is pictured in the Old Testament way, as a supreme Sovereign who dwells in Heaven, high above the earth.

In the sayings of Christ Himself, we find that God is constantly associated with 'Heaven':

[1] Vol. VII, p. 167a, Art. 'Immanence'.

Our Father, which art in Heaven:
My Father in Heaven;
Your heavenly Father;

—and so forth.[1]

Such phrases, occurring in the Synoptic Gospels over a score of times on the lips of Jesus, endorse the Old Testament conception of God as a transcendent Person, dwelling in Heaven, and to some extent apart from this world.

This, however does not mean that to Christ, any more than to the writers of the Old Testament, God is an 'absentee' God. Far from it. He is a Father who 'sees in secret' all that happens on earth,[2] and sends His Spirit upon His chosen ones.[3] All this brings Him near to man. Yet the very emphasis upon these 'comings' of God, and the wonder and surprise which they evoke, is a sign that God is not thought of as permanently and essentially immanent in all life.

'*Not to destroy, but to fulfil.*' Nowhere in the Synoptic record of the words of Jesus Christ, is there any tendency on His part to destroy the fundamental Old Testament emphasis upon the transcendence of God, or to replace it by the idea of a God who is essentially and permanently dwelling in, or organically united with, man and the world. The reader who is acquainted with the Bible only is liable to overlook the significance of this, because he takes it for granted. But let any one who is familiar with the Upanishads as well as with the Old Testament turn from both of these to the teaching of Christ, and he will then vividly realize how intimately the latter is woven upon the loom of Old Testament thought, and how widely it is separated from the fundamental conceptions of the 'immanentist' religions.

This is not to suggest that Jesus Christ is a mere imitator or repeater of Old Testament doctrines. He builds up His own teaching with originality, and even with daring; but the foundation upon which He builds is the faith of His forefathers —faith in the Lord Jehovah as a personal God, transcendent in

[1] Matt. vi, 9, 14; Mark xi, 26; etc. The phrases occur with special frequency in St. Matthew.

[2] Matt. vi, 6, 18.

[3] Mark i, 10; Luke iv, 18, etc.

Heaven; a God whose moral qualities separate Him essentially from evil, and ally Him with the good, so that He 'takes sides' in the battle of life; a God whose presence on earth is due to a deliberate act of His will, and not to any merely metaphysical necessity of His being. This is the conception of God which Jesus 'came not to destroy, but to fulfil'; and it is on this foundation that He builds His own distinctive thought of God as 'Our Father in Heaven'.

*The new features in the teaching of Jesus.* But having said this, we must add something further. Though Jesus Christ does not attempt to annul the Old Testament doctrine of God, He certainly does introduce new elements into it; and some of these bid us think of God as an indwelling God in a fuller sense, and with a greater emphasis, than any that the Old Testament can show.

(*a*) In the first place, *the conception of Divine Sovereignty is largely replaced by that of Divine Fatherhood.* In the Old Testament, as we have seen, the predominant attribute of God is that of Sovereignty. He is 'the King', 'the Almighty', 'the Lord of Heaven and Earth'. At its highest and best, the idea of a Divine Sovereign offers a noble conception of supreme greatness; but it can easily degenerate into that of a Super-Sultan, unlimited indeed in power, but irresponsible and choleric, acknowledging no moral principles, who must be approached with caution or cajolery, and whose presence inspires uncertain fears and hopes.

Now in the teaching of Jesus, the metaphor of Divine Sovereignty is not entirely dropped. It occurs in many of His parables and similes, in which God is pictured as King and as Judge.[1] It is implied, too, in His favourite metaphor of 'The Kingdom of God'. Indeed, no conception of God would be adequate which overlooked this; for a religion without the idea of Divine Sovereignty would lack the notes of reverence and righteousness, and the Lord God Almighty would become merely an amiable 'bon Dieu'.

But in the teaching of Jesus, the Sovereignty of God, while clearly affirmed, is not the centre of emphasis. That centre is

[1] Matt. xviii, 23; xxii, 2; xxv, 31 ff; Mark xii, 9, etc.

to be found in His constant reiteration of the Fatherhood of God. In this matter, He goes beyond the teaching of the Old Testament,[1] and adopts a richer symbol for our thought of God. Here we see one of those features which are distinctive, and which consequently (as we have already noted), indicate the real heart of His message.

Now the idea of Divine Fatherhood essentially implies the Divine *nearness* to man. No one, surely, has ever been so intensely conscious of the nearness and accessibility of God as was Jesus Christ.[2] For Him, God was always close at hand; in any trouble or crisis, He could turn to Him at once, and say; 'Father. . . !'[3] At times He remains all night in conscious prayer and communion with God.[4] We know that in human life, this term 'father', which Jesus chose as the most illuminating that He could find for the description of the Divine Nature, suggests a tie of close intimacy between father and son, and even a measure of 'indwelling',—for a father 'lives again' in his son. So the idea of the Divine Fatherhood brings us very close to that of Divine indwelling in man; and certainly 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' can never be regarded by His children as a purely transcendent God. For Christ teaches that this consciousness of the fatherly nearness of God, which He Himself realized in such unique measure, is available also for all His followers. They too may learn, like Him, to turn to God continually, as to a Father who is close at hand, and to live as children who are always in His Presence.[5] Moreover, God's fatherly love also sends Him out 'to seek and to save' His lost sheep, or His lost son; and in that sense, He is *near* even to those who are turning away from Him.

(*b*) Another conception which receives new emphasis in the teaching of Christ is *the indwelling of the Divine Spirit in the children of God.* It is an essential part of Christ's Good News

[1] In the Old Testament, references to God as 'Father' are rare and exceptional (e.g. Psalm lxviii, 5; ciii, 13; Jer. xxxi, 9; Malachi ii, 10); whereas in the Gospels, it is the normal designation.

[2] Cf. T. R. Glover, *The Jesus of History*, London, 1917, p. 93.

[3] Mark xiv, 36; Matt. xxvi, 39, etc.

[4] Luke vi, 12; cf. Matt xiv, 23.

[5] Matt. v, 45, etc.

that God bestows the gift of His own Spirit to dwell in the hearts of His children.

We have already met with this idea in the Old Testament, though there it is limited to special occasions, and bestowed for special purposes.[1] In the Synoptic Gospels, it occurs much more frequently. The birth of Jesus is ascribed to the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the Virgin Mary (Matt. i, 18, 20; Luke i, 35). The Spirit of God descends upon Jesus at the outset of His ministry (Mark i, 10), and at once begins to be the impelling motive of His actions (Mark i, 12; Luke iv, 14). He is described as 'full of the Holy Spirit' (Luke iv, 1); and similar phrases are used of John the Baptist, Zacharias, Elizabeth, and Simeon, as well as of Mary the mother of Jesus.[2] Jesus also speaks of His own body as a 'temple' or shrine of the Divine Presence (Mark xiv, 58; cf. John ii, 21). Moreover, one of the special functions ascribed to Jesus was to baptize His followers with the Spirit.[3]

But in the teaching of Jesus Christ, this gift of the Divine Spirit is not confined to abnormal occasions. It is a gift normally bestowed by God upon His children.

> If ye . . . know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?—Luke xi, 13.
>
> The Holy Spirit shall teach you in that very hour what ye ought to say.—Luke xii, 12.
>
> It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.—Matt. x, 20; cf. Mark xiii, 11.

Such passages show that Christ clearly taught that the indwelling of the Spirit of God in the hearts of His disciples is a regular element of Christian experience; and they offer a sound basis for the extensive development which this idea receives in later Christian theology. There remain, however, several important questions associated with this main idea, to

[1] See above, p. 83.

[2] Luke i, 15, 41, 67; ii, 25. In other passages, the Spirit is described as 'coming upon' or 'overshadowing' the recipient (Luke i, 35; cf. John i, 51); phrases which seem as though designed to guard against an over-material conception.

[3] Mark i, 8, etc.

which it is less easy to give an immediate answer, on the basis of the Synoptic evidence.

(i) *Did Christ teach that the Divine indwelling is normal in every human soul?* The passages which we have just mentioned suggest that the Divine indwelling, though a vital element in God's relation to those who are His children, is nevertheless subject to certain conditions, and bestowed only in certain circumstances. For the Holy Spirit is here described as being given either (*a*) to those who are 'children of God', or (*b*) in response to a definite request, or (*c*) in order to provide guidance for a special emergency.

Can we go further than this, on the evidence of the Synoptic Gospels?—Did our Lord teach also that there is some measure of Divine indwelling in the heart of every man, because human nature, as such, is essentially one with the Divine? This question is really a part of the still larger question of God's fatherly relation to mankind.—Did Christ teach that God is essentially the Indweller in all human souls, or only in the hearts of those who have responded to His love? To this, diverse answers have been given, all through the history of Christendom. On the one hand, it has been urged that since the love of God, as revealed by Christ, is 'broader than the measures of man's mind', it is unthinkable that any one of His creatures should be excluded from its scope, or from some measure of His presence within them. On the other hand it is clear that Christ repeatedly affirms that there are essential *conditions* on the human side, without which man cannot realize his inheritance as a child of God: conditions such as faith, and prayer, and love:

> Love your enemies, . . . . *that ye may be* (ὅπως γένησθε) sons of your Father which is in Heaven.
> —Matt. v, 44, 45; cf. Luke vi, 35.
>
> Blessed are the peacemakers: for *they* shall be called sons of God.—Matt. v, 9.
>
> Ask, and [*then*] it shall be given you.—Matt. vii, 7.

Such passages warn us against the facile assumption that all men are *equally* God's children, and that therefore God must dwell alike in all human hearts.

Moreover, Christ does not picture the presence of God under the similes of spatial nearness, as though it were present after

the manner of a 'thing', irrespective of moral or spiritual conditions. It is true that He speaks of His own human body as 'a temple of God' (Mark xiv, 58, etc); but even here, the inner shrine of the Divine presence is not the physical flesh, nor any kind of merely passive receptacle, but the soul or spirit, with its capacity for moral and spiritual co-operation with God. Nor should we overlook in this connexion His tremendous emphasis on the Divine Righteousness—an emphasis every whit as striking as that of the Old Testament;[1] and it is inconceivable that a God essentially righteous should dwell in the heart of the sinner in the same way as in the heart of the saint. At the same time, we need to remember that the God of Jesus Christ is not only the Righteous One, but also the Saviour, who goes out to seek and save the lost. In some sense, therefore, God may be regarded as present 'with' evil (though not 'in' it); for wherever the sinner is, there God is, at hand to save.

So after weighing both sides of the problem, we may perhaps accept the solution suggested by St. Paul in 1 Timothy iv, 10, and conclude that while God is in some sense 'the Father of all men', He is in a deeper sense 'the Father of them that believe'; so that His indwelling Spirit becomes fully creative and effective only in the hearts of true believers.[2]

In the Synoptic Gospels, this absence of any distinct affirmation of a permanent or essential Divine indwelling in all men is all the more significant, when we notice how frequently the narratives refer to another kind of 'spiritual indwelling' in human beings, who are constantly described as 'possessed' by spirits that have their abode within them.[3] The idea of spiritual indwelling was thus obviously familiar and natural to the minds of the Synoptists, and they depict Jesus Christ Himself as accepting this view; for His words constantly assume the reality of demon-possession. We read too that He was also conscious at times within Himself of an indwelling power to heal, which could be drawn out of Him without any conscious

[1] See the Parables of the Last Judgement (Matt. xxv), or of Dives and Lazarus (Luke xvi).

[2] See below, p. 122.

[3] Mark i, 23; Matt. xii, 45; and frequently throughout all the Synoptists.

act of will on His part.[1] But in spite of all this, He never seems to have spoken in similar terms of the indwelling of God, as though *that* could be within a man without his own knowledge, or irrespective of his attitude of conscious faith towards God.

There is indeed one saying of Christ (recorded by St. Luke alone), which seems to affirm a universal relationship between God and all men, at least suggestive of a universal Divine indwelling:

> God is not a God of dead people, but of living, for all live to him (αὐτῷ ζῶσιν).—Luke xx, 38 (Moffatt).

This may mean only that every human soul, in so far as 'lives' in any true sense, must lead a God-ward life. On the other hand, it may possibly echo a note which, though not prominent in the Synoptists, was really latent in Christ's teaching, and implies some conception on His part of a universal Divine indwelling in all mankind. But this is by no means certain. So we conclude that the Synoptic Gospels offer us no clear evidence that Jesus taught His disciples to think of God as necessarily indwelling in every human soul.

(ii) A further question now claims our consideration. *Did Christ teach that God is immanent in all His creation?*—in the world of Nature, as well as of human nature? There certainly is clear evidence in the Synoptic Gospels that Jesus regarded Nature as God's handiwork, and as a picture reflecting His glory and care; even as the Old Testament had taught.[2] In His parables, He takes the common events of field and lake, and uses these as pictures of God's working. He tells us that it is God who 'clothes the grass of the field'.[3] Moreover, the evangelists imply that it is by the indwelling power of God that Christ Himself wields superhuman control over the forces of Nature.[4]

[1] Luke viii, 45 f.: 'Jesus said, Who touched me? . . . Somebody did touch me, for I felt power (δύναμις) had passed from me' (Moffatt). This seems to imply that the power had gone out without any conscious control by Him. Cf. Mark vi, 56.

[2] See above, p. 81.

[3] Matt. vi, 30.

[4] Mark iv, 41, etc.

But this Divine control *over* Nature is by no means the same as the Divine immanence *in* Nature, as it is pictured, for instance, in the Upanishads. Of Divine immanence in the world, in this latter sense—essential, organic and permanent—there is scarcely any suggestion to be found in the Synoptic records of Christ's teaching.

*The indwelling Purpose of God in history.* This is another aspect of Divine indwelling which is implicit in the teaching of Jesus, as recorded by the Synoptists.

The idea that the hand of God is to be seen in all the course of historical events was an essential part of the Jewish faith in God; and in this sense the Jews (more perhaps than any other people of the ancient world) believed in an 'immanence' of the Divine Mind or Purpose throughout the story of mankind. This conception is found also in the teaching of Jesus Christ. The very idea of a future 'Kingdom of God', which occupies a place at the very heart of His message,[1] implies that this is the goal of history—a goal which will be attained by God's control of the affairs of the world, whether operating by catastrophe or by the working out of gradual processes. So the Divine Mind is continually guiding the course of events towards a climax—('the Kingdom') 'to which the whole Creation moves'. Moreover, this Rule or Reign of God, which is to reach its consummation in the future Kingdom, is even now operative, as immanent Divine Will. In a well-known passage Christ tells the Pharisees that neither '"here", nor "there", but "in your midst" (ἐντός ὑμῶν) is the Kingdom of God'[2]. It is true that this notion of a guiding Will and Purpose in History is not strictly 'immanentist', if immanence be conceived of only after the manner of a material indwelling. But it is undoubtedly suggestive of some kind of Divine indwelling; it relates the transcendent God to the things of earth, and it is in harmony with that intense awareness of God's nearness to man, which (as we have seen) is so central in the teaching of Christ. It has also some points in common with the 'scientific' idea of an evolutionary 'urge' at work behind all the phenomena of life. Moreover, it brings God into contact

[1] Mark i, 15, etc.

[2] Luke xvii, 21 (Moffatt); the A.V. and R.V. translate: 'within you.'

with the mystery of suffering, and points towards the great principle which is symbolized by the Cross, that fuller life comes only through death, and that God is to be found in pain as well as in triumph.

*Conclusions from the Synoptic Gospels*

So far, we have confined our study of Christ's teaching to the Synoptic records. On this basis, we have reached the following conclusions:

1. The teaching of Jesus Christ, broadly speaking, follows the Old Testament tradition, directing our attention mainly to the personal and transcendent attributes of God.

2. But Christ's emphasis on the Divine Fatherhood brings God nearer to us than was the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and unites Him with us in the intimate relationship of Father and children.

3. Christ teaches that God gives His Spirit to His children, to dwell in their hearts, in answer to their faith and prayer.

Beyond these three points, the evidence of the Synoptists is indirect and inconclusive. We must now see whether these conclusions need to be modified or supplemented, in the light of the evidence available in the Fourth Gospel.

## C. The Fourth Gospel

*The Distinctive Features of its Teaching*

St. John's Gospel, as we have seen, offers us a picture of Christ which in some respects differs considerably from that of the Synoptic Gospels.[1] What are the distinctive features in the Johannine record of our Lord's teaching on the subject of Divine indwelling? We may specially note two:

(*a*) *An increased emphasis on the indwelling of God in Christ and in His disciples.* In the Fourth Gospel, the Divine indwelling, both in Jesus Christ Himself and in the hearts of the saints, looms larger and more explicit than in the Synoptists. The mutual union and indwelling of God and Christ is constantly reiterated:

[1] See above, p. 96, n.

> I am in the Father, and the Father in me.—John xiv, 11.
> He whom God has sent . . . God gives him the Spirit in no sparing measure.—iii, 34 (Moffatt).

Moreover, this Divine indwelling in Jesus is the archetype of the Divine indwelling in the hearts of His disciples:

> That they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me.—xvii, 22, 23.
> I am the vine, ye are the branches.—xv, 5.
> Abide in me, and I in you.—xv, 4, 1.
> The Spirit, . . . remains with you, and will be within you. —xiv, 17 (Moffatt).

And the Lord's parting gift to His disciples was the gift of the indwelling Spirit (xx, 22; cf. vii, 39).

No clearer affirmations of the Divine indwelling in the human soul could be defined than these.

At the same time, we note that here, as in the Synoptists, the presence of God is *conditioned* by moral qualities in the heart of the worshipper:

> *If* a man love me, . . . we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.—xiv, 23.

Further, the continuance of the Divine presence depends upon the human co-operation of the receptive soul; for the exhortation given to the disciples to 'abide' clearly implies that this 'abiding' is to some extent a matter of their choice and effort. The Divine immanence in humanity is not regarded by the Fourth Evangelist, any more than by the Synoptists, as a process that takes place 'in the nature of things', irrespective of the disposition of the human soul towards God.

(*b*) *A more definite insistence upon the spiritual nature of the Divine indwelling*. This is a further distinctive characteristic of the Fourth Gospel, which uses a number of similes to describe the Divine indwelling. Many of these are physical or material similes; but the wide variety of the symbols is itself an indication that the 'thing signified' is something *beyond* human words to express, and is only partially indicated by the similes. It is described as 'Light' (i, 9); as 'Life' (xi, 25 f., etc.); as 'living Water' (iv, 10 ff.); as 'Bread' (vi, 35, 48–58); as 'Blood' (vi, 56). Now such terms may rightly be used, and

may prove helpful and illuminating, so long as we recognize that they are not adequate or exhaustive; and Jesus expressly warns His followers against the idea that 'that which indwells' is to be regarded as a material thing. For, after insisting on the necessity for 'eating the Bread of Life', He adds:

> What gives life is the Spirit; flesh is of no avail at all. The words I have uttered to you are spirit and life.
>
> —vi, 63 (Moffatt).

And the 'streams of living water' are expressly interpreted as symbolizing 'the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive' (vii, 39, Moffatt). This is in harmony with the emphasis upon the 'spiritual' character of the true worship of God as a Spirit: 'Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem. . .' (iv, 21). These passages indicate that, according to the author of the Fourth Gospel, Jesus Christ conceived of the Divine indwelling more as a personal or spiritual influence, conveyed through the medium of the spoken or written word, than as any kind of quasi-material substance. In one striking saying, He seems to suggest that even the coming of the Word of God *to* men has the effect of making them in some sense divine, and thus produces an effect akin to that of Divine indwelling in man:

> If the Law said they were gods, to whom the word of God came—and scripture cannot be broken—do you mean to tell me, whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming', because I said, 'I am God's Son'?
>
> —x, 35 f. (Moffatt).

Thus far, the Fourth Gospel is in complete harmony with the Synoptists, representing Jesus as teaching that God is near to all men, that He comes to dwell in the hearts of those who trust Him as their Father, and that through this indwelling, He and they become spiritually one.

But in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel, there are some passages which seem to go further, and suggest a permanent and essential immanence of God in all mankind and all creation. We should note, however, that in the Prologue the writer is not professing to give us a direct report of the words or teaching of Christ; and so our consideration of the Johannine Prologue may perhaps best be referred till a later chapter, in

which we shall be studying the conception of Divine indwelling in the primitive Church.[1]

*Conclusions from the Fourth Gospel*

Apart from its Prologue, the Fourth Gospel offers us no direct evidence that the conception of universal Divine indwelling in mankind at large and in Nature was explicitly taught by Jesus Christ. The utmost we can say is that the Johannine reports of Christ's teaching suggest that His emphasis on the Divine indwelling may have been greater than we should have gathered from the Synoptists alone. In this matter, it is by no means unlikely that St. John, who obviously had affinities with both mystical and philosophic types of mind, may have had the deepest insight of all the evangelists into the true mind of our Lord.

### D. The Extra-Canonical Sayings of Jesus

Among the traditional sayings of Jesus which are found outside the Canonical Gospels, there is one which, if it could be accepted as genuine, would give us definite evidence that Jesus Christ did teach a doctrine of Divine immanence in material things. The text of this (as conjecturally reconstructed) runs thus:

> Wheresoever there are two, they are not without God;
> And where there is one alone, I say, I am with him;
> Lift up the stone, and there shalt thou find me;
> Cleave the wood, and I am there.[2]

There is another traditional saying of Jesus, which also suggests, rather more vaguely, the idea that God is in everything; but only fragments of this saying are preserved:

> Who are they that draw us . . . ? The fowls of the heaven —whatsoever is under the earth,—the fish of the sea—these, are they that draw you; and the Kingdom of Heaven is within you, . . . and whosoever knoweth . . . shall find it. And ye shall know yourselves that ye are of the Father.[3]

[1] See below, pp. 126 ff.

[2] *Oxyrhynchus Papyrus*, I, quoted in M. R. James in *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford, 1924, p. 27. Cf. Hastings' *D.B.*, Extra Vol., p. 347a, Art., 'Apocrypha'; Logion V.

[3] *Oxyrhynchus Papyrus* 654; quoted in M. R. James, op. cit., p. 26.

These are striking sayings, and indicate a line of thought which we did not find in the Canonical Gospels. It is impossible definitely to disprove their genuineness; and if they are genuine, it would follow that this line of thought did have a place in the teaching of Jesus Christ. In that case, the silence of the Gospels would have to be explained by one of two suppositions: either that our Lord's teaching on these lines was given but rarely, or else that it was not readily intelligible (nor perhaps entirely acceptable) to the evangelists, who therefore omitted it from their records.

But these Apocryphal sayings of Christ contain elements of very varying historicity; and in view of the absence of any other support for them, and the marked contrast between them and the rest of Christ's recorded teaching, it seems probable that they should be regarded simply as the expression of the belief of some devout Christian soul, who had himself been influenced by the idea of Divine immanence in Nature, and was anxious to associate the authority of the Lord with a conception which he felt to be of value.

### E. General Conclusions

It now remains for us to gather up the main conclusions to which our study of the teaching of Jesus Christ has led us.

We need to remember in the first place that He was not primarily a philosopher, but a prophet. His chief method was not to argue, or to discuss, but to proclaim. He concentrates His teaching on a message of Good News, telling men what God is, and what man can become.

Consequently, the problems which occupy the mind of many philosophers find but little place in His teaching. 'How did the world originate?'—'How did evil arise?'—'How is the one God related to man and to Nature?'—none of these questions come directly within the range of His teaching; though sometimes we can indirectly infer what He would probably have said in answer to such questions. But the substance of His message to his followers is made abundantly clear through parables, sermons and examples. He assumes that God is a Person—and He seems unconscious of any 'Absolute' in the remoter background. He tells us that God is our Father—and He is not

troubled by the fact that this term comes to us full of human associations and limitations. He shows us that God's Spirit dwells within us — but He does not go into any discussion of the *way* in which this Indwelling Spirit is related to our own spirit. He bids us recognize the hand of our Father-God in all creation —but He does not explain how this is to be reconciled with the fiercer aspects of 'Nature red in tooth and claw'.

Such is Christ's message about God. He bids us stake our all upon the truth of this message, assuring us that if we trust God wholly, we shall find Him wholly true. Then—but not till then—we shall be in a position to discuss 'the problems of His presence'.

It is the same with Christ's teaching about men. His picture of man is clear and vivid. He shows us man as a child of God, strayed and lost beyond hope of recovering the way for himself; but capable, if he will trust and obey, of receiving from God new power to turn back and make a fresh start. Then God will deal with him as a son and as a friend; and his heart will be a shrine within which God Himself will dwell. Jesus Christ does not put forward this as a theory for discussion, but as a way of salvation to be tried out. If tried, it will lead to Life; but only when we have tried it and proved it shall we be in a position to discuss, from the Christian standpoint, the many problems, intellectual and moral, which it involves.

This, in brief, is the message concerning God and man which Jesus Christ proclaimed,—not as a philosophy, but as a revelation from God. As we have seen, He Himself does not discuss in detail the relation of this positive message to philosophical problems, such as those connected with the idea of Divine indwelling. But there are certain implications which seem to follow from any careful consideration of His message.

1. God, as proclaimed by Jesus Christ, is assumed, without discussion, to be a personal God. There is no sign in Christ's teaching of that alternation between the two ideas of God as either personal or impersonal, either 'He' or 'It', which characterizes the Hindu tradition. Now if Jesus Christ's God is essentially personal, He can never be rightly pictured as an indwelling substance, of a material or quasi-material nature, either in man or in the world; but must always be thought of

as a living and life-giving Spirit, capable of inspiring and influencing other persons. Any other conception of Divine indwelling is non-Christian or, at least, sub-Christian.

2. At the heart of the message of Jesus is the assurance that the supreme God is 'our Father'. Now even in human life, the highest type of fatherhood does not violate the personality of children, by crushing or forcing their will, or by annulling the human self within each one. So, if God dwells with us as our Father, we may be sure that His indwelling will not be such as to violate the sacredness of our own human personalities, or to make us mere passive tools in His hand. The God within us will be our helper and inspirer, in such a way as to leave the real (though limited) freedom of our own wills unimpaired. Although between the Divine and the human there must always be the fundamental distinction that lies between Creator and created, nevertheless the two can blend in harmony and co-operation within a single human life; and it is not always wise to attempt to draw a hard-and-fast line between the two, or to define precisely where the Divine activity ends and the human activity begins. Christ's view of Divine indwelling thus excludes any idea of 'possession', such as would displace the human self, or relieve it of full personal or moral responsibility. Not thus can a father dwell in his children.

3. The God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ is essentially a good and righteous God. Therefore we can never suppose that His indwelling in man is unaffected by the presence of evil or sin. Only in the right kind of soil (so Jesus expressly taught) can the divine seed grow. It is entirely contrary to Christ's teaching to say that God dwells equally in the sinner and in the saint. It is true that in one sense, the Divine presence is everywhere, and nothing is entirely apart from Him. It is also true that at all times, the purpose of His presence is to save and help. Yet, when confronted with evil, His presence also becomes a test, which may bring to us either condemnation or salvation. That was true, as St. John reminds us, of the presence of Jesus Christ Himself on earth; for although He was full of goodness and love, His coming led some of those to whom He came to plunge more

deeply into sin. 'This is the sentence of condemnation, that the Light has entered the world, and yet men have preferred darkness to Light. It is because their actions have been evil.'[1] These words came from the pen of the same writer who tells us that Christ is 'the Light which enlightens every man'. So while it is true that wherever we meet with evil and sin, we may, in one sense, feel sure that God's presence is near at hand, waiting to save, and even (as the Christian view of the Cross reminds us) 'taking the sin upon Himself', nevertheless this Presence does not become fully effective or operative until the human response has blended with the Divine initiative.

The conclusions that we have thus far outlined can be based, either directly or indirectly, upon the records of our Lord's teaching in the Gospels: and in so far as we claim the special authority of Christ for our teaching, we shall do well to keep, broadly speaking, to the lines indicated above. Nor do these confine us within any narrow limits. To have the assurance of God's fatherly presence near us at all times and in all circumstances—to know that His power is accessible and available for us at any moment to meet our every need—to realize that His Spirit is indwelling in our hearts to strengthen, comfort, guide and inspire us:—this is no narrow gospel, but a rich and dynamic message of salvation.

At the same time, Christian thought need not necessarily be confined even within these wide limits. Christ leaves the way open on many sides for fresh adventures in thinking, which while they do not come within the scope of His recorded teaching are not condemned (nor yet endorsed) by His authority.

There are many such lines of thought opening out from the central conception of Divine indwelling which we have found in Christ's teaching. There is, for instance, the belief that in every human being there is some 'divine spark' which offers a point of contact with God; or the significance of that 'awareness' of the Divine presence in all the wide world of Nature, which has been characteristic of some of the finest souls in all ages. Such ideas as these have again and again found a place in the minds of those who stand loyally within

[1] John iii, 19 (Moffatt).

the Christian tradition, and of the Christian quality of whose souls there can be no question. In such matters, we need to remember that the silence of Christ does not necessarily imply condemnation. We may, for instance, agree with Dr McGiffert that the wider conception of Divine immanence was 'far from the thought of Jesus Christ',[1] without maintaining that such an idea is *contrary* to His thought. There are whole realms of Science and Art which (so far as we can judge from the Gospel narratives) were 'far from Christ's thought'; but we do not therefore pronounce them untrue or valueless. Life would be the poorer, were we to do this. It is surely a right instinct to see God in that which is beautiful; and in every honest search for truth, we may recall Christ's promise that the Spirit of God will go with us, into the unexplored parts of His world. As Christians, we may rejoice in a widening awareness of the presence of God, so long as this does not dim our eyes to the majesty of the Divine transcendence, nor obscure our vision of the essential antagonism between good and evil. Within these limits, and along the lines indicated by the Gospels, the thought of Divine indwelling not only may, but should, hold an important place in the Christian view of life.

[1] See above, p. 98.

# CHAPTER VIII

## THE EXPERIENCE AND DOCTRINE OF DIVINE INDWELLING IN THE CHURCH OF THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES

### A. The Apostolic Writings of the New Testament

When we turn from the Gospels to the other books of the New Testament, we find several intermingling factors in the teaching and experience of the Apostolic Church with regard to the Divine indwelling:—(1) the old Hebrew background of thought, (2) the influence of the teaching of Christ, and (3) the new Christian experience of the Spirit. At first there was little change in the background of thought which the Christian Jews, who formed the primitive Church of Christ, inherited from Old Testament times. But though this background remained, the foreground soon began to change, under the influence of the teaching of Jesus, which, though not clearly or fully grasped at first, gradually modified the outlook of His disciples in many important respects. Besides this, the Church, beginning with the dramatic events of the Day of Pentecost, entered into a new spiritual experience of God, which brought to the Christian group an entirely fresh realization of the Divine presence in their midst and in their hearts. For them, this gift of the Spirit came to be the supreme reality of life,—an experience so real and unquestionable that it could be assumed by every Christian preacher as a fact that none of his Christian hearers would doubt for a moment, and on which he could confidently base any argument that seemed logically to follow from it.

These three factors, as yet scarcely harmonized into a logical unity, come before us constantly in the later pages of the New Testament.

*The Acts of the Apostles*

*Its Old Testament background.* In the earlier chapters of Acts, the Old Testament background remains very little

changed. God is pictured as Sovereign and Judge, up in Heaven, and apart from the earth (Acts ii, 32-35; vii, 56, etc.). Generally, He leaves man alone, to go his own way (xiv, 16); yet not without witness to God's goodness and care (xiv, 17), nor without occasional Divine visits to earth in times of crisis (xviii, 9; xxiii, 11, etc.). In St. Stephen's speech (vii), we have a fine picture of the Divine will indwelling and controlling the whole history of the Chosen People.

*Factors which lessened the Christian sense of the Divine Presence in the world at large.* In several respects, the dominant tendencies in the thought of the early Church tended to minimize, rather than to emphasize, any general awareness of the Divine presence in the world at large. Chief among these was the 'eschatological' hope of the immediate return of the Lord Jesus from Heaven. This is vividly reflected in the early chapters of Acts, where we read that Jesus has gone *away* from earth after His Resurrection, to sit with God on His throne in Heaven; but that He will soon come again to earth, this time in glory, and as Judge, riding on the clouds.[1] Now it is evident that the more clearly and intensely such a conception was held, the less did it encourage any idea of general Divine indwelling in the world or in the heart of mankind at large, during the 'interim' period. For the glory of the future Coming and Presence was instinctively contrasted with the dreariness and transitoriness of the present age of 'exile' from God;[2] and this tended to set God and the present world in opposition to each other, rather than to suggest any permanent association of the two, such as is implied by the idea of Divine Immanence.

*The new Christian experience of the Spirit.* At the same time, from the very beginning, the Church had a new experience of the indwelling Spirit in the hearts of those whom God had called. This experience was recognized as the free expression of God's grace and goodness; not limited to those within the Old Covenant, but breaking out wherever souls were honestly seeking the light.[3] References to this 'gift of the Spirit' are found

[1] Acts i, 11; iii, 20–21; vii, 56; cf. 1 Thess. iv, 13-18.

[2] Cf. 2 Cor. v, 6.

[3] Acts x, 35; xi, 17, etc.

frequently throughout Acts, beginning with ii, 5. It is always regarded as a supernatural gift, rather than a natural process; a *new* experience, a *new* creation, due to a special act of God's will and grace.

In short, apart from one sentence in the report of St. Paul's speech at Athens,[1] the picture of the early Church which is given to us in Acts reflects an idea of God which is predominantly transcendentalist, and closely akin to that of the Old Testament; but with a distinctive emphasis on the Christian experience of the indwelling Spirit. The same might be said of the New Testament Epistles, James, Hebrews, 1 Peter, as well as of the Revelation of St. John. We conclude from these that the general outlook of the primitive Church was characterized by an ethical Dualism, rather than by a Monism which conceived of God as the All-Pervading Indweller.

*The Epistles of St. Paul*

The teaching of St. Paul holds so large and important a place in the New Testament, that it requires separate consideration at some length.

*The Hebrew tradition in St. Paul's earlier epistles.* In his earlier epistles, especially to the Thessalonians, St. Paul's outlook on the subject of Divine indwelling seems to have moved but little from that of his own old Hebrew tradition. His emphasis on the Second Coming of Christ, and on God as the transcendent Judge who will pronounce the final verdict on all men, is pictured in Jewish Apocalyptic imagery,[2] and leaves but little place for a philosophy of Divine indwelling.

*St. Paul's Christian experience of the Indwelling God.* But gradually the experience of the indwelling Christ, or the indwelling Spirit (for St. Paul seems to use the two terms almost interchangeably),[3] comes to occupy a place more and more nearly at the heart of his gospel; and it continues to hold this position throughout his later letters.

[1] Acts. xvii, 22–31. For further consideration of this passage, see below, p. 121.

[2] See 1 Thess. iv, 13–18; 2 Thess. i, 7, ii, 10; Rom. ii, 16, etc.

[3] See, e.g., Rom. viii, 9–11.

Thus in Galatians:

> I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me.
> —Gal. ii, 20; cf. i. 16.
> I am . . . in travail until Christ be formed in you.
> —Gal. iv, 19.

In Corinthians:

> Ye are a temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. —1 Cor. iii, 16; cf. vi, 19 and 2 Cor. vi, 16.
> We . . . are transformed into the same image [i.e. the Divine] . . . even as from the Lord the Spirit. —2 Cor. iii, 18.

In Romans:

> God's love floods our hearts, through the holy Spirit which has been given to us. —Rom. v, 5 (Moffatt).

> You are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells within you. Any one who does not possess the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. On the other hand, if Christ is within you, . . . the spirit is living, as the result of righteousness. And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells within you, then He . . . will also make your mortal bodies live by His indwelling Spirit in your lives. —Rom. viii, 9–11 (Moffatt).

In the Epistles of the Imprisonment:

> The divine energy, which is a power within me.
> —Col. i, 29 (Moffatt); cf. Phil. ii, 13 (R.V.)
> You yourselves are built into this [sacred temple], to form a habitation for God, in the Spirit. —Eph. ii, 22 (Moffatt).
> That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.
> —Eph. iii, 17 (R.V.)
> To me to live is Christ. —Phil. i, 21 (R.V.)

In the Pastoral Epistles, it is still prominent, though a little overshadowed by the stress on organization and 'safeguards':

> Keep your faith intact, by aid of the holy Spirit that dwells within us. —2 Tim. i, 14 (Moffatt).
> God has given us . . . a spirit of power and love and discipline. —2 Tim. i, 7 (Moffatt).
> The holy Spirit which he [God] poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ. —Titus iii, 5, 6 (Moffatt).

And as the archetype of all this Divine indwelling in man, St. Paul sets the perfect Indwelling of God in Christ:

> In him [Christ] the divine Fulness (*Pleroma*) willed to settle without limit. —Col. i, 19 (Moffatt).

No more emphatic affirmations of belief in the Divine indwelling in the Christian soul could be imagined than those which are set before us in these passages. But there remain one or two questions not altogether easy to answer.

1. *Was this Divine indwelling regarded by St. Paul as confined to the Christian Church*, or as a special manifestation of a wider indwelling which extends beyond the Church? That St. Paul's main emphasis was upon the novelty and distinctiveness of the experience, is beyond question. It was an essential part of that 'newness of Life' which had come to him through Christ: he had known nothing like it, before he had found Christ—or had 'been found by Him'; and to that extent, it was a distinctively new and Christian experience.

On the other hand, St. Paul's conception of the Christian Gospel was essentially a comprehensive, rather than an exclusive one. St Paul, who struggled with all his powers against the Jewish claim that the grace of God was limited to one organization or one race, was not the kind of man who was likely to erect fresh barriers to confine the free gifts of God, or the spontaneous operation of His Spirit, within the bounds of any human system, creed, or church. In the case of Gentiles, such as Cornelius, the Spirit of God had unmistakably broken the bounds of the Old Covenant (Acts x, 47; xi, 17), and Paul had been among the first to recognize this (Acts xv, 12; Gal. ii, 11 ff.). We should expect such a man to be always ready to welcome fresh signs of God's presence and indwelling, even in quarters hitherto supposed to be outside His chosen channels of grace. And in fact we find that in those very passages in which St. Paul gives us the picture of the Church as 'The Body of Christ' (i.e. an organ through which Christ works, and within which He dwells) he associates this idea closely with that of a wider indwelling of Christ in all creation. Thus, in Ephesians:

> The church which is his Body, filled by him *who fills the universe entirely*. —i, 23 (Moffatt).

In Colossians also, the two ideas are placed side by side:

> In him *all things* consist. And he is the head of the body, the church. —i, 17 f. (R.V.)[1]

[1] Cf. Rom. xii, 5; 1 Cor. xii, 13; Eph. iv, 4, etc.

These passages show that to the mind of St. Paul, the conception of Christ as 'the Indweller of the Church' did not involve the corollary which has often been associated with it in later Christian doctrine—namely, that *outside* the Church, Christ does *not* dwell. On the contrary, he definitely associates together the special indwelling in the Church and the wider indwelling in the world at large, as two aspects of the same truth.

2. In a more concrete form, the same problem confronts us with the specific question: *Does God dwell in the hearts of non-Christians?* Here again we find that St. Paul seems sometimes to lean towards an affirmative answer, but more often towards a negative.

There is one well-known passage in St. Paul's speech at Athens which certainly seems to recognize an essential kinship between God and mankind at large:

> [God] . . . giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and he made of one every nation of men . . . that they should seek God . . . and find him, though he is not far from each one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.
> —Acts xvii, 25–28.[1]

Now this passage shows that St. Paul was prepared to use the Greek philosophic idea of the essential oneness of God and man, as an axiom on which to base his appeal to a Greek audience. If so, we can hardly doubt that he himself did believe in it to some extent; although perhaps his avowed method of being 'all things to all men' (1 Cor. ix, 22) might lead him to adopt this as a method of approach, without necessarily endorsing all its implications.

Apart from this passage, however, we do not find in St. Paul's epistles much disposition to recognize a Divine element in mankind as a whole. His general tendency is to draw sharp contrasts between believer and unbeliever:

[1] The words τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμὲν are found in a poem τὰ φαινόμενα (*Phenomena*) by Aratus of Cilicia (C. 270 B.C.); and almost the same phrase occurs in the *Hymn to Zeus* by Cleanthes the Stoic, about the same date. In both cases, the setting is pantheistic, or at least immanentist. See A. Menzies, in A. S. Peake's *Commentary on the Bible*, London, 1919, ad loc., p. 796.

> What communion hath light with darkness? . . . or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever?—2 Cor. vi, 14, 15.

Similarly he insists that man, without the special grace and mercy shown to him by God through Christ, is irretrievably lost:

> Ye were at that time separate from Christ, . . . having no hope, and without God in the world. —Eph. ii, 12.

Thus we find in St. Paul two lines of thought with regard to the Divine indwelling in mankind at large: one affirming its universality, and the other restricting it to the Christian experience of God in the redeemed soul. Can the two be reconciled? In part, they are associated with two lines of approach to this large subject. Along one line, St. Paul starts from his own experience of the Indwelling God, since he became a Christian; and this had been so unique and distinctive that he could not associate it with any other kind of religious experience that he had known or heard of. So he concludes that this presence of God can be known only through Christ. On the other hand, at times his mind starts from the abstract thought of God as the Supreme, and then he feels that he cannot set any limits to the Divine indwelling, for God surely must fill all things.

It may be possible to harmonize these two lines of thought, by observing that while the Divine presence is everywhere, it is perceived and appropriated only where there is faith to receive it. 'All men live and move and have their being in God; but not all men know it.'[1] Therefore, in so far as the Christian experience of God is unique, the full realization of His presence may be regarded as limited to those who have entered into that experience; yet even in wider spheres outside, the presence is 'latent' and available for realization. Such a solution may not satisfy the strict logician, and may not have been consciously present to the mind of St. Paul; but in this, as in most of the larger problems of life, human logic proves ultimately to be inadequate to embrace all the facts of life in a single system.

[1] C. Anderson Scott, *Christianity According to St. Paul*, Cambridge, 1927, p. 150. Cf. 1 Tim. iv, 10.

3. We may pass now to a further question. *Did St. Paul recognize God as the Indweller in the Universe at large?* St. Paul certainly affirms that through Nature, 'God's invisible power and Divine being have been quite perceptible' (Rom. i, 20; Moffatt). But God may be thus 'reflected' in the world, without dwelling in it; and in spite of St. Paul's speech at Athens and the further general principle laid down by him, that 'God fills the Universe' (Ephi. i, 23), he himself does not show in his letters any personal awareness of God in Nature. Although his travels took him to and fro amid scenes of unsurpassed beauty, no word of appreciation with reference to any of these occurs in any one of his letters. Neither the blue waters of the Mediterranean nor the picturesque Isles of the Aegean, nor the wild gorges of the Taurus Range, receive even a passing comment from his pen. Surely this shows that he was not a Nature-mystic: but that he regarded Nature as at present outside the sphere of salvation, 'groaning in the travail' that must precede the coming of the New Age.[1]

4. *The relation of the Sacraments to the indwelling God in St. Paul's teachings.* We may pass now to another question, closely connected with St. Paul's conception of the Christian experience of 'God within': Did he conceive of the Christian experience of Divine indwelling as mediated to the Christian soul, normally or exclusively, through the Sacraments of the Church? This is an important question; for if it is answered in the affirmative, then the development of Catholic theology during subsequent centuries, with its close association between Divine indwelling and the Sacraments, may be regarded as resting upon an Apostolic and New Testament foundation.

Some recent commentators have maintained that St. Paul viewed the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist very much as the adherents of the Greek cults viewed their 'Mysteries';—i.e., as external rites through which an invisible 'grace' is conveyed to the soul of the recipient, in such a way that the grace may be regarded as contained in, and limited by the physical channel. Thus Dr Kirsopp Lake writes:

[1] Rom. viii, 22.

> Baptism is, for St. Paul and his readers, universally and unquestionably accepted as a mystery or sacrament which works *ex opere operato*.[1]

Pringle-Pattison takes a similar view:

> . . . the Roman [Catholic] doctrine may stand nearer to the conceptions and general religious outlook of the first Christian believers than the symbolic and purely spiritual view for which Protestantism contends.[2]

In support of this contention, it is pointed out that St. Paul sometimes writes as if the method of the Christian sacraments were similar to that of the Mysteries, even though their moral effects are diametrically opposite:

> You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and also the cup of dæmons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and also of the table of dæmons. —1 Cor. x, 21 (Moffatt).

In the Pastoral Epistles also, some of the references to the rite of 'laying-on-of-hands' might well suggest that a spiritual 'grace' is latent within the rite, and conveyed by it, as by a physical channel, to the recipient:

> Stir up the gift of God which is in thee through the laying on of my hands (διά τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν μου). —2 Tim. i, 6; cf. 1 Tim. iv, 14, Acts xix, 6.

The description of Baptism as 'the washing of regeneration' (Titus iii, 5) is also suggestive of the view that this sacrament

[1] Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul*, London, 1911, p. 383. It should be noted that the phrase *ex opere operato* does not necessarily imply that the working of the sacrament is entirely unaffected by the faith or disposition of the recipient. It is possible to hold that while the grace is always 'infused' by the sacrament *ex opere operato*, its effects may be either beneficial or the reverse, according to the way in which it is received. In one much-disputed passage, St. Paul himself seems to imply that an unworthy reception of the Christian Eucharist may produce sickness, or even death (1 Cor. xi, 30). But the phrase *ex opere operato* may also be used to denote a purely mechanical operation, in which the recipient plays no part at all. Thus A. Schweitzer, speaking of St. Paul's view of Baptism, says: 'The dying and rising again of Christ takes place in him without any co-operation or exercise of will or thought on his part. It is like a mechanical process.' *Paul and His Interpreters*, London, 1927, p. 225 f.

[2] Pringle-Pattison, op. cit., p. 217.

works automatically (*ex opere operato*); and the obscure reference to 'baptism for the dead' (1 Cor. xv, 29) may also point to the prevalence of such ideas in the Church at large.

At the same time, none of these passages are explicit or decisive; and the general trend of St. Paul's thought seems to be definitely *against* any idea that the Divine grace or presence can be contained in, or limited to, any external element or ceremony. Again and again he insists on the freedom of God's grace to work spontaneously—where He wills indeed, but always in response to human faith, and often in unexpected ways (Rom. v, 14; Gal. v, 1; etc.). He is frankly contemptuous of the idea that God can indwell in a sacred image (1 Cor. viii, 4; Rom. i, 23). In his controversy with the conservative Jewish Christians, he refuses decisively to condition the grace of God by any external rite, even though this might be as divinely-ordained as circumcision itself (Gal. v, 2, 6; vi, 15). Nor does he ever suggest that in place of the ceremonies of the Old Testament, which (he maintains) are no longer binding under the Gospel, other new ceremonies, such as Baptism, are substituted as necessary conditions of salvation for all Christians. If he had really believed this, it is almost incredible that he would have omitted to state it clearly; or that he would then have thanked God that the work of baptizing had held only a small place in his own apostolic ministry (1 Cor. i, 14). As Dr Anderson Scott says:

> He (St. Paul) attached real value to the two rites of Baptism and the Eucharist; but the nature of their value was to express, confirm, and maintain a relation which was already established by faith, not to establish or nourish the relation *ex opere operato*.[1]

It is indeed quite likely that many of the more simple-minded among the early Christians did view the sacraments as 'Mysteries', by means of which God's grace is conveyed to the Christian soul, as through a channel. This idea would be familiar to them in their pre-Christian days (if they were converts from among the Greek population), and was easy for them to understand and to visualize. But that St. Paul

[1] *Christianity According to St. Paul*, p. 122.

himself, or indeed any of the apostolic leaders of the church, adopted this view of the sacraments, seems to us 'not proven', and inconsistent with the general lines of apostolic teaching.[1]

This is not, of course, to deny that St. Paul, and his apostolic colleagues *associated* Divine grace and the Divine presence with the Sacraments. But such association need not involve any sense of limitation, such as is at once suggested by the use of the metaphor of a stream of grace flowing through a channel, or a medicine infused into our souls.[2] Indeed whenever the Presence in the Sacraments has been pictured as contained 'in and under' any one element or any particular ritual, so that when this is lacking the Presence is absent,—there has been a definite departure from the Pauline conception of the grace and Presence of God within the Christian heart as an act of free, unconditional love.

*Other New Testament Writings*

*The non-Pauline Epistles*, for the most part, throw but little further light upon the idea of Divine indwelling in the primitive Church. We find in them many echoes of the normal Old Testament conception of God as the Heavenly Sovereign, whose Son 'sustains the Universe with his word of power' (Hebrews i, 3; Moffatt), but who draws near to His children who approach Him, dealing with them graciously and bestowing His Spirit in their hearts, so that they become 'living stones' in His temple.[3]

*The Johannine writings*, however, contain some passages of great importance for our study; particularly in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel.

[1] For instance, St. Peter seems anxious to guard against some such popular view of Baptism, when he warns his readers that the saving power of Baptism, consists in 'not the mere washing of dirt from the flesh, but the prayer for a clean conscience before God' [1 Peter iii, 21 (Moffatt); cf. John vi, 63].

[2] For the important distinction between the idea of the sacraments as quasi-physical channels that 'contain' grace, and symbols that are used as 'means of grace' by a Person because of their psychological association, see C. W. Emmet, 'The Psychology of Grace', in *The Spirit*, London, 1919, pp. 164 ff.; also O. C. Quick's *The Christian Sacraments*, London, 1927, p. 112.

[3] 1 Peter ii, 5; cf. James iv, 5; Hebrews vi, 4; 2 Peter i, 4; etc.

> Through him [the Logos] all existence came into being, no existence came into being apart from him. In him, life lay, and this life was the Light for men. —i, 3, 4 (Moffatt).
>
> The real Light, which enlightens every man, was coming then into the world.' —i, 9 (Moffatt).

These passages, especially if read together with the whole Prologue, certainly seem to imply a universal immanence of God in Nature and in man. The first passage, coupled with the assertion that the *Logos* in the beginning not only 'was with God' (ἦν πρὸς τόν θεόν), but also 'was God' (θεὸς ἦν) carries us beyond the Neo-Platonic idea of a Logos that is 'not quite God', and implies that the Supreme One Himself is the Indweller. The statement that 'apart from the Logos, no existence came into being' suggests an intimate, organic relation between the Logos and the world (at any rate at the beginning of creation) which differs essentially from the Old Testament idea of creation by Divine command. Moreover, in the second passage, the statement that the Logos 'enlightens every man' clearly suggests some measure of Divine indwelling in every human soul.[1] Both these passages therefore point towards a wider and more universal conception of the Divine indwelling than we have met with elsewhere in the Gospels; for all restrictions and conditions attached to it are here withdrawn, or at least are not mentioned.

We have already noted, however, that these passages do not record, or claim to record, the actual teaching of Jesus Christ. Doubtless the writer believed that their doctrine was in harmony with the mind of the Master; but their direct authority is only that of the disciple. Moreover, their meaning is not altogether explicit or decisive. The former passage hardly goes beyond an indirect suggestion of Divine immanence in all things. The latter is consistent with the view that, while the Divine presence is 'latent' in all men, it only becomes effective in them through the co-operation of their faith; and this is in harmony with the general trend of Gospel teaching on this subject. So although

[1] The A.V. reads: 'every man that cometh into the world', which implies that the Divine Light is given to every man *at his birth*. The readings of the R.V. and of Moffatt are less explicit on this point, but they equally affirm the Divine enlightening of 'every man'. Cf. John viii, 12; ix, 5; xii, 46.

these passages certainly open the way for a Christian doctrine of universal Divine indwelling, they hardly justify the building of any very large doctrinal structure on this basis alone.

We noticed above[1] that the Fourth Gospel lays great emphasis upon the indwelling of God in the believing and loving soul, and in the Johannine Epistles the same feature recurs. The indwelling is again described under various similes: as Light (1 John i, 7), as Love (i, 16), as the Spirit (iii, 24), and as Anointing (ii, 27). But it is always subject to certain conditions on the human side, such as Faith and Love:

> If we love one another, then God remains within us.
> —1 John iv, 12 (Moffatt).
> Whoever confesses that 'Jesus is the Son of God', in him God remains, and he remains in God. —iv, 15 (Moffatt).

But the wider conception of Divine immanence throughout the Universe receives little notice in the Johannine Epistles.

*In the Apocalypse of St. John*, the Christian experience of the writer is placed in the setting of apocalyptic imagery, which (as we have seen) normally tends to suggest the absence, rather than the presence, of God in the affairs of earth. But the writer's vision of 'the City that is to be' is full of the thought of the Divine presence there, as Light and Life (Rev. xxi, 3; xxii, 1-5).

*General Conclusions from the Apostolic Writings of the New Testament*

We have seen that, apart from St. Paul's later Epistles and the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel, the Apostolic writings of the New Testament do not carry us much beyond the normal outlook of the Old Testament, with regard to the indwelling of God. The new experience of God in the hearts of Christians was indeed intense, and unique, but its implications were not yet clearly thought out; it was a matter for devout thanksgiving, rather than for reflection or reasoned consideration. It was not clearly related to the Apocalyptic Hope of the immediate return of the Lord Jesus, nor yet to any idea of the presence of God in the world outside the Christian Church. It was a spontaneous witness to a spiritual experience, rather than a logically formulated doctrine. The development of a distinctively *Christian*

[1] Pp. 107 ff.

doctrine of Divine indwelling belongs to a later age of the Church.

## B. The Sub-Apostolic Fathers and Apologists[1]

### *General Trends of Thought in this Period*

*The change of 'atmosphere' after the New Testament.* The reader who passes from the New Testament to the Christian writings of the first and second centuries which are outside the Canon cannot but be struck by the change in the quality of the literature. For in the non-canonical books, even where a high moral and spiritual note is sustained, the intellectual standard falls to a comparatively low level. There is very little constructive thought, or any that goes beyond the reaffirmation of familiar truths, or scholastic deductions from earlier authorities. Nevertheless, a study of this period is full of interest; for here we can trace the beginnings of some of the most significant developments of later Christian thought. In part, these are due to external influences, and in part to movements of thought within the Church.

[1] The following table gives the approximate dates of the chief writings and authors referred to in this section.

| Authors and Writings | Date | English Text used for Quotation |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Clement of Rome: *Epistle to the Corinthians* ... ... | *c.* A.D. 95 | Lightfoot's *Apostolic Fathers*, one-vol. edition, London, 1898 |
| 2. *The 2nd Epistle of Clement*: 'An Ancient Homily' ... | *c.* A.D. 120 | ,, |
| 3. Ignatius of Antioch: *Seven Letters* ... ... | *c.* A.D. 110 | ,, |
| 4. *The Epistle of Barnabas* ... | Either first or second century A.D. | ,, |
| 5. *The Didache* ... ... | ,, | ,, |
| 6. *The Epistle to Diognetus* ... | *c.* A.D. 120–150 | ,, |
| 7. Hermas: *The Shepherd* ... | *c.* A.D. 130 | ,, |
| 8. Polycarp: *The Epistle to the Philippians* ... ... | d. A.D. 155 | ,, |
| 9. Justin Martyr ... ... | d. *c.* A.D. 165 | *The Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Edinburgh, 1868, etc. |
| 10. Hippolytus ... ... | d. *c.* A.D. 235 | ,, |
| 11. Athenagoras ... ... | d. *c.* A.D. 230 | ,, |
| 12. Tertullian of Carthage ... | d. *c.* A.D. 240 | ,, |
| 13. Cyprian of Carthage ... | d. A.D. 258 | ,, |
| 14. Clement of Alexandria ... | d. *c.* A.D. 203 | ,, |
| 15. Origen of Alexandria ... | d. A.D. 253 | ,, |

*The effect of persecution and controversy upon early Christian doctrine.* An atmosphere of constant danger and the prospect of violent death are not favourable to a wide recognition of the presence of God everywhere. Divine Omnipresence, in such circumstances, may be a fact, but is not very helpful. As Tertullian remarked:

> God is everywhere, no doubt; but so are the dæmons![1]

So the God for whom the martyrs yearned was not a vaguely all-pervading One, but a warrior-God, who 'would go into prison with them',[2] finally overthrow the powers of evil, and bring in a better world. Such a God is the eternal antagonist of an evil world and evil men, and stands in stark contrast with things as they are, as the Transcendent rather than the Indweller. To quote Tertullian again:

> The Divine and the human are ever opposed to each other.[3]
> Natural men are not the friends of God.[4]

The early Christian conception of Divine indwelling was also influenced by the arguments which the Christian Apologists took up in answer to the attacks upon Christianity which were made at this time from various quarters. For instance, in the controversy with Greek philosophy, the majority of the Apologists were led to contrast the 'false knowledge' of human learning with the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ. Tertullian is specially uncompromising with regard to what he calls 'the execrable gods of the heathen' and their worshippers:

> There is nothing in heathen writers which a Christian can approve.[5]
>
> What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?—What concord is there between the Academy and the Church?[6]

And since 'Athens' stood largely for an immanentist view of

[1] *On the Testimony of the Soul.* [2] Tertullian, *To the Martyrs.*

[3] *Apology*, i.

[4] *On Spectacles*, ii.

It should be remembered, however, that while Tertullian regards 'men as they are' as the enemies of God, he believed that the human soul in its primitive simplicity will be found to give 'the Witness of a Soul naturally Christian'. See *On the Testimony of the Soul*; also his *Apology*, xvii.

[5] *On the Testimony of the Soul.*

[6] *On the Prescriptions of Heretics*, vii.

God, the Christian Apologists were driven, by their controversial arguments, towards a more decisive Transcendentalism.

If most of the Apologists saw no good in Greek Philosophy, they were even more vehemently opposed to Gnosticism—that strange medley of Western and Eastern speculation and doctrine, which claimed to be the highest knowledge and to 'subsume' Christianity under a larger view of life. To writers such as Irenaeus and Tertullian, Gnosticism was the arch-enemy of the Gospel; and in refuting it, they were again led to stress the transcendence of God, rather than His immanence. As against the Gnostic theory that this world was created, not by the Supreme God, but by a secondary 'Demiurge' or Creator-God of inferior character, they insisted that it is the direct creation of the Supreme Being, through His Word or Logos.[1] This swept away the whole mass of Emanations, Aeons, and other intermediary beings of Gnostic speculation. It also left the way open for some idea of direct contact between God and His world, and even of some 'organic relationship' between them; but in fact, such ideas are rarely, if ever, suggested by the Christian Apologists. In opposition to the Gnostic idea of 'emanations', they set the doctrine of 'creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) by bare command'.[2]

This in turn led on to the conception of God as one who, though He contains all things in His totality (*pleroma*), yet remains essentially outside the above world, as its 'Master, Architect, and Demiurge' (*Epistle to Diognetus*, vii). So Athenagoras, though he speaks of the Logos as 'the energizing power of all material things', separates Him essentially from His creation:

> The world, being spherical, is confined within the circles of heaven; while the Creator of the world is above the things

[1] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, I, v, 2, 5; x, 4; xvii, ii, etc; Tertullian, *Against Hermogenes*—which, however, recognizes a general *growth* of cosmic order out of chaos. The Christian 'Writer to Diognetus' (§ vii) uses the term 'Demiurge' of the Creator-God. Justin Martyr stands almost alone in regarding creation not as *ex nihilo*, but as 'formation out of unformed matter' (*1st Apology* I, i).

[2] Irenaeus, op. cit., II, x, 3, 4. 'God called into being the substance of this creation, when previously it had no existence.' Cf. Hippolytus, *Against Noetus*, x; Tertullian, *To Hermogenes*, xv, xvi. See also below, p. 146.

> created. . . . God and matter are at the greatest possible remove from one another—as great as the artist and the materials of his art.[1]

From time to time, indeed, we meet with a phrase in the apologists such as that 'God fills all things'; but no attempt is made to develop this idea, except in the Alexandrian School.[2] The general conception of God which was set forth by the Apologists in opposition to Gnosticism as that of a God who is (in the words af Hippolytus) 'essentially heterogeneous (ἀκατάλληλος) in relation to everything else'.[3]

Again, as against the Gnostic tenet that all matter (including human flesh and blood) is essentially evil, and that therefore Christ, as Son of God, could not have possessed a real human body, but only a phantom thereof, the Apologists insisted that Christ's body was really human, and that consequently our human flesh and blood is capable of receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, especially through the Eucharist.[4] This teaching, while emphasizing the reality of the Divine indwelling in Christian souls, at the same time gave an impetus to the tendency to picture it in terms of a physical process.

The external influence of persecution and controversy upon the Church was thus on the whole unfavourable to any development of Christian Immanentism in the first three centuries. We may now turn to influences at work within the life and thought of the Church.

### *The Development of Christian Doctrine in general and its Bearing upon the Idea of Divine Indwelling*

*The Doctrine of the Trinity.* We noticed that in the New Testament, the experience of the indwelling God was spoken of sometimes as 'Christ within', sometimes as 'the Spirit within' and sometimes as 'The Father within',[5] as though these phrases were practically synonymous and interchangeable. Moreover, throughout the first and second centuries, we meet from time to

[1] *Plea for the Christians*, viii, xi.
[2] See below, pp. 137 ff.
[3] *Against Beron and Felix*, v.
[4] E.g., Irenaeus, op. cit., v, 2.
[5] See, e.g., St. John, xiv, 9, 17, 18; Rom. vii, 9–11; Eph. iii, 17; Titus iii, 5, 6, etc.

time with such statements as 'The Spirit *is* Christ',[1] which would not have been recognized as orthodox at a later stage of doctrinal development. But gradually there emerges a definite doctrine of Three Persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—within the Godhead, each with distinct functions and attributes.[2] This led to a more complex view of the modes of Divine indwelling; and we note a tendency to differentiate between the indwellings of the Three Persons. For instance, Baptism is specially associated with the imparting of the Third Person (the Holy Spirit); while the Eucharist is specially the vehicle of the Second Person (Jesus Christ), whose Body and Blood are thereby received. One method of distinguishing between the several kinds of indwelling associated with the Three Persons of the Trinity is propounded by Origen of Alexandria:[3]

> The working of the Father and the Son takes place in saints as well as in sinners, in rational beings and in dumb animals; nay, even in things without life, and in all things that exist. But the operation of the Holy Spirit does not take place at all in things without life, or dumb, or engaged in evil course; but only in those who abide in God.[4]

This particular theory, however, has not been endorsed by the Church as a whole, and is distinctly condemned by St. Basil, who says:

> All operations are equally performed in all who are worthy of them, by the Father and by the Son and by the Holy Spirit.[5]

But many later writers have endeavoured in various ways to distinguish the indwellings of the Three Persons one from another; and thus the Doctrine of the Trinity has tended to make the idea of Divine indwelling less simple and spontaneous than it had been in New Testament times, and to associate it with a more complex and metaphysical theology.

*The Doctrine of the Incarnation.* During these centuries, another Christian Doctrine—that of the Incarnation of God in Christ—was also being defined with greater precision. The main

[1] *The Shepherd of Hermas*, Parable ix, 1; cf. Tertullian, *On the Flesh of Christ*, xviii; Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, lxxxviii.

[2] See, e.g., Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*.

[3] For Origen and the School of Alexandria, see below, p. 137 ff.

[4] *On Principles*, i, 3, 5-8. [5] *To Eustathius*.

outlines of the Catholic Doctrine of the Incarnation were clearly laid down by the Apologists, even before they were ratified by the Council of Nicaea. Jesus Christ, as the Logos, is the agent through whom God creates the world. Sometimes He is pictured as a Ray from the Divine Sun, distinct from, and yet of one substance with, the Supreme; so that as the warmth and light of the sun are conveyed by its rays to human bodies, Christ through the Sacraments conveys to Christian souls the very essence of the Divine Nature. This, however, was regarded by the Church as a purely supernatural miracle, and was not generally associated with any idea of the essential unity of God and man, or with the universal immanence of God in His creation.

*The transfer of emphasis from 'experience' to 'authority' in the Church.* Perhaps even more far-reaching than the developments that we have so far been considering was another change that took place in the life of the Church during the first two centuries. In our study of the New Testament Acts and Epistles, we observed that the new Christian experience of the indwelling Spirit of God through Christ was the central feature in the life of the Church:—an experience spontaneous, unexpected, overwhelming, and unfettered by any external conditions. 'The Spirit blew where it listed.' But in the sub-apostolic writers, the intensity of this experience declines, and its spontaneity is greatly modified. They are very conscious of their own spiritual inferiority to the apostles;[1] and although they still claim that the gift of the Spirit is a peculiar privilege of the Church, and are still able to point confidently to the moral superiority of Christians over non-Christians as unquestionable evidence of this, nevertheless it is evident that by them the indwelling Spirit is no longer being experienced as a mighty inbreaking tide, but is regarded rather as a precious deposit, committed to the care of the Church, and subject to safeguards which must be carefully observed, lest the deposit be lost.

By some of the second century writers, the experience of the Spirit is regarded as an exceptional gift, belonging to a past

[1] E.g., Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (martyred in A.D. 155), writes to the Philippians: 'Neither am I, nor is any like unto me, able to follow the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul.'—*To the Philippians*, iii.

'golden age', or confined to a few specially holy persons or classes. 'Inspiration', too, is limited to the writers of the Scriptures, who are described as passive tools in the hand of the Spirit,[1] or to the special class of 'prophets',[2] and is not to be looked for among the members of the Church as a whole.

*The emphasis upon the necessity of the Church organization, and the limitation of Divine indwelling to the Church's rites.* As the gift of the Spirit came to be regarded as an orderly process, guaranteed by, or even confined to, the Church, we find more and more emphasis laid upon the organization of the Church, and in particular, upon the Apostolic Succession through the Bishops, and the Sacraments ministered under their authority. This tendency to emphasize the necessity of Church-organization begins to appear even before the end of the first century; e.g., in the Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, *c.*A.D. 95.[3] Shortly afterwards, in the Letters of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, (whose second name, by the way, was *Theophoros*, 'one who carries God within him') it becomes much more explicit:

> Take only Christian food; abstain from heresy. This will be, if ye be inseparable from Jesus Christ and from the Bishop and from the ordinances of the Apostles.[4]

A little later, Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons from A.D. 177–203, insists that Divine truth is contained in, and confined to, the Church:

> The Apostles lodged all things pertaining to the truth in the Church as in a bank; so that every man can draw from her the water of life.[5]

Still more exclusive is the teaching of Tertullian (*c.* A.D.

[1] This conception is more akin to 'possession' than the higher types of Divine indwelling. Thus Athenagoras (A.D. 200) says: 'The Holy Spirit moved the mouths of the prophets like musical instruments.'—*Plea for the Christians*, vii; cf. 2 Peter i, 21.

[2] See, e.g., *The Didache*, xi, where 'prophesying in the Spirit' is referred to as a regular feature of contemporary church life; and also *The Shepherd of Hermas*, Mandate xi. But in another very early Christian writing, *The Epistle of Barnabas* (*c.* A.D. 120), we find no reference at all to the experience of Divine indwelling, in any class of Christians.

[3] See §§ xlii-xliv.

[4] *To the Trallians*, vi.

[5] *Against Heresies*, iii, 4; cf. iii, 3.

160–240), and Cyprian (d. 258), who were leaders of the Church of Carthage in North Africa. On the subject of Apostolic Succession through the Bishops, Tertullian writes:

> The Son did not reveal the Father to any but the Apostles: so that only through them and their successors can the deposit of truth be passed on.[1]

Cyprian carries this teaching to its logical conclusion, and asserts that apart from the Episcopal Succession, there can be no true Church, and that outside this one true Church, the grace of God cannot be found:

> Pluck a ray from the sun—unity admits of no division! Break a bough off the tree—once broken, it will bud no more! Cut a rill off from the spring—the rill cut off dries up! . . . . . He cannot have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his Mother.[2]

Here we have, in uncompromising rigidity, the conception of the Divine presence and grace as strictly limited to the organized Church, under the authority of the Bishops as Christ's viceregents. This view, though occasionally modified by theoretical recognitions of a wider immanence, governs the main thought of the Western Church, from Cyprian onwards, until the time of the Reformation in the sixteenth century.

Closely connected with this doctrine of the Church as the exclusive home of the indwelling God is the doctrine of a special Divine immanence in the Christian Sacraments. The material elements in Baptism and the Eucharist are regarded as so changed by consecration, that they 'contain' things spiritual and Divine, and convey these to the body and soul of the faithful recipient. Tertullian thus describes the water in Baptism:

> God has made the material substance an agent in the celestial. The Spirit, after invocation, sanctifies the water from Himself, so that it imbibes the power of sanctifying, and is endowed with medicinal virtue. . . . Without Baptism, salvation is obtainable by none.[3]

A similar conception is applied to the Eucharist. Ignatius

[1] *On the Prescriptions of Heretics*, xxi.
[2] *On the Unity of the Church*, vi-vii.
[3] Cf. Hippolytus, *On the Holy Theophany*, ix.

describes it as 'the Medicine of Immortality',[1] and condemns as heretics those who 'allow not that the Eucharist is the Flesh of the Saviour'.[2] Irenaeus is even more explicit:

> When the Cup and the Bread receives the Word, the Eucharist is made, from which the substance of our flesh is increased and supported; and from this we learn that the flesh is capable of receiving Life Eternal.[3]

In the light of these and many similar passages, it is evident that by the end of the second century the average Christian was taught to believe that through the Sacraments, God was definitely 'made to dwell' within him; and although this did not necessarily exclude other methods of Divine indwelling, it came more and more to be regarded as the normal and assured means of receiving the Presence of God; and compared with this all other methods seemed abnormal and insecure. The verification of the reality of this Divine gift of the Spirit lay not in the 'feeling' of the individual recipient, but in the Divine guarantee to the Church and her Sacraments. Indeed, the gift might even be bestowed without any knowledge on the part of the recipient. Thus 'the appeal to authority' replaced 'the appeal to experience' as witness to the Divine Indwelling, which was now conceived as restricted to a limited and authorized sphere.

*The 'Wider Immanentism' in the Church of the first three centuries: The School of Alexandria*

So far, the tendencies we have been studying have been in the direction either of an emphasis upon Divine Transcendence, almost to the exclusion of Divine Immanence, or else of an assured but limited indwelling within the Church and Sacraments.

But this period was not altogether devoid of another type of thought within the Church. Side by side with the uncompromising hostility towards the outside world displayed by Tertullian, Irenaeus and Athenagoras, we find a more eirenic outlook, which rejoiced to find points of contact between

[1] *To the Ephesians*, xx.

[2] *To the Smyrnaeans*, vi; cf. *To the Philadelphians*, iv.

[3] *Against Heresies*, v, 2.

Christian and non-Christian thought, and was led thereby to recognize the indwelling of God and the operation of Christ outside the bounds of the organized Church.[1]

An early representative of this tradition was Justin, martyred about A.D. 165. Justin welcomes the truth that he finds in non-Christian writers. Of Plato he says that 'he spake well', in proportion to the share he had of 'the Word that is sown like a seed' (σπερματικὸς λόγος).[2] Every human soul, he maintains, is 'a part of the very regal mind of God'.[3] And following out the thought of St. Paul,[4] he tells us that:

> Christ is the Word of whom every race of men were partakers; and those who lived according to the Word (μετὰ λόγου) are Christians, as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and among the Barbarians, Abraham, Michael, Elijah, etc.[5]

This conception of 'the larger Christ', beyond the historic person of Jesus of Nazareth, is developed further in the Christian School of Alexandria, at the close of the second century and the beginning of the third.

Of this school, Prof. H. M. Gwatkin wrote: 'It stands for a conception of revelation in many respects higher than any that we shall meet again till after the Reformation.'[6] Certainly in the early Church it is unique for breadth of vision and courage of expression. Its two most famous heads were Clement (A.D. 190–203) and Origen (A.D. 203–231); both of whom tried to combine the tradition of Greek philosophy (especially in its Neo-Platonic form) with the message of the Gospel, and the learning of the ancients with 'the larger Christ'. Thus Clement says:

[1] In the curious, heterogeneous mass of Apocryphal Christian books, there are also a few passages which suggest that among some groups of Christians there was a vague Nature-mysticism, which differed from anything that is explicit in the New Testament, and which cherished the idea of 'God within all things'. See above, p. 109 f.

[2] *2nd Apology*, xiii; cf. his *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*, xxix, xxxii.

[3] *Dialogue with Trypho*, iv.

[4] 1 Cor. x, 4; 'They (the Old Testament Fathers) drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ.' Even Irenaeus sometimes strikes a similar note (*Against Heresies*, iv, 14).

[5] *1st Apology*, xlvi; cf. *2nd Apology*, ii, 13.

[6] *The Knowledge of God*, Vol. II, Edinburgh, 1908, p. 89.

> The Son is always everywhere, yet contained nowhere. All men are His. It was He who gave philosophy to the Greeks. He is the power, the wisdom of God.[1]

So with regard to Gnosticism. Clement refuses to follow Irenaeus or Tertullian in denouncing it as wholly 'of the Devil'; but he claims that Gnostic ideals are best fulfilled in Christianity, which is, in fact, 'the true Gnosticism.'[2]

Both Clement and Origen find a natural affinity between the human and the Divine:[3]

> God mingles with humanity, as salt with the sea.[4]
> Every rational creature, without any distinction, receives a share of the Holy Spirit.[5]

It is true that in this same passage, Origen contrasts the free outpouring of Spirit in the Christian dispensation with the limited gift 'to the prophets, and a few individuals' before the coming of Christ.[6] But he seems to regard the Incarnation, not as something 'wholly other', but rather as a perfect expression of that union of human and Divine which is only partially achieved elsewhere. Moreover, he does not hesitate to affirm that through fellowship with Christ, ordinary human nature may be 'made Divine'.

> Human nature, by fellowship with that which is more Divine, may be made Divine; not in Jesus only, but in all those who by faith take up the life which Jesus taught.[7]

Nor is it only in humanity that Origen finds God; for he adopts the Platonic conception of the whole Universe as 'the Body of God':

> This whole world ought to be regarded as some huge and immense animal, which is kept together by the power and reason of God, as by one soul.

In support of this, he quotes Jeremiah xxiii, 24; 'Do I not fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?'[8]

[1] *Miscellanies*, vii, 2. [2] *Miscellanies*, i, 4.

[3] Clement, however generally guards himself carefully against any association of God with evil (e.g., *Miscellanies*, vii, 2, etc.)

[4] Clement, *The Instructor*, iii, 1. [5] Origen, *On Principles*, II, vii, 2.

[6] *On Principles*, II, vii, 2. [7] *Against Celsus*, iii, 28.

[8] Clement, *The Instructor*, ii, 1, 3.

This conception, while affirming the universality of the Divine indwelling in the world, allows for various grades of indwelling, and for moral distinctions and a scale of values within the unity. In accordance with this, Clement bids us think of God as dwelling *most* fully in goodness:

> The best thing on earth is the most pious man. . . . It is not the place [the Church-building] that I call 'the Church', but the assemblage of the saints. In the true Gnostic [i.e., the Christian], Christ is enshrined; in the righteous soul, God is localized.[1]

In such passages, the philosophy of the Christian Alexandrians seems closely akin to the more ethical types of Immanentism found in the Greek and Hindu traditions, combining breadth of outlook with the safeguarding of moral values.

But consistency is not among the chief virtues of the Alexandrian teachers; and the ideal of Divine indwelling outlined above is often modified by exceptions and reservations. We have already noted Origen's distinction between the various methods of indwelling by the Three Persons of the Trinity.[2] And with regard to the Incarnation of God in Christ, his instinctive Neo-Platonic hesitation to bring God into real contact with matter makes his exposition halting and artificial.

Thus the Neo-Platonist in him protests that 'it is impossible for the nature of God to intermingle with a body, without an intermediate instrument';[3] but the Christian in him refuses to surrender the belief in the Incarnation. So he argues: 'The substance of "soul" (*anima*) being intermediate between "God" and "flesh", it is not contrary to the nature of Christ's soul to receive God.'[4]—Surely an evasion, rather than an explanation?

The Alexandrians remained only a minority in the Church, and eventually Origen was condemned as a heretic. This was much more than the condemnation of an individual; for it marked (as Dean Inge has said) 'the transition from Platonism to Aristotelianism in the Church',[5] and the suppression of really independent philosophic thought within the Church for many

[1] *Miscellanies*, vii, 2.
[2] See above, p. 133.
[3] *On Principles*, II, vi, 3.
[4] Op. cit., II, 1–3.
[5] W. R. Inge in Hastings' *E.R.E.*, Vol. I, p. 318, Art. 'Alexandrian Theology'.

centuries. Some later Christian writers dabbled in high-sounding philosophic terms, which partly conceal the lack of substance in their thinking.[1] The majority of them thought it safer to follow the principle laid down by Tertullian, that 'when once we have believed in Christ, the search for truth should cease'; or at least that 'if we still seek, let it be only for that which can become an object of inquiry without impairing the Rule of Faith.[2]

[1] Dean Inge, in *Christian Mysticism*, London, 1912 edition, p. 106, quotes a sentence of this kind from Pseudo-Dionysius (*c.* A.D. 350): 'The hiddenness of the All-transcending Super-essentially Super-existing Super-Deity' (τῆς κρυφότητα τῆς ὑπερ πάντα ὑπερουσίως ὑπερούσης ὑπερθεότητας).

[2] *On the Prescription of Heretics*, xi, xii.

# CHAPTER IX

## THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE INDWELLING IN ORTHODOX AND CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY

### A. The Age of the Creeds and Councils (Fourth and Fifth Centuries A.D.)

*General Characteristics*

The Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) stands as a landmark between two ages of the Church. Behind it lies the 'primitive' period of Church History, in which there were many divergent types of thought, all claiming to be Christian; for although the main line of teaching in the Church was becoming increasingly well-marked, no fixed definition of the Faith had yet been accepted by a representative body of the whole Church in Council. The authority of Scripture was indeed recognized by all schools of thought; but the appeal to proof-texts had not resulted in reducing the divergencies to any single logical system. From Nicaea onwards, however, a succession of Church Councils began to define the Christian Faith in careful and precise terms, which became an exact measuring-rod wherewith to estimate the orthodoxy of Christian thinkers and philosophers.

Not that there is any real hiatus between the Ante-Nicene and Post-Nicene Ages of the Church. The same processes were at work throughout:—on the one hand, a widening understanding of the implications of the Gospel, and a legitimate 'development of doctrine'; on the other hand, a decay of the first zeal and love, a tendency to compromise with standards lower than those of Christ, and an exaltation of unimportant regulations and theories into Divinely-authorized doctrines and commands. These tendencies of Christian thought in the first three centuries continue without any break into the centuries which followed; only they now move within limits much more clearly defined, so that any transgression of these limits can be quickly repressed. Nor was there any further

important irruption of really fresh thought into the Church (comparable to the influence of Greek philosophy and terminology in the first three centuries) until the Classical Renaissance and the Teutonic reinterpretation of Christianity by the Reformers, some twelve hundred years later.

*The Doctrine of Divine Indwelling as set forth in the Creeds*

The earliest Creeds of the Church[1] are not primarily concerned with the relation of God to the world, or even to man, but with the relation of God to Christ within the Godhead. So we find in the Creeds scarcely any direct reference to Divine indwelling; which is perhaps one reason why such wide differences of opinion on this subject have been permitted by the Church in all subsequent ages.

In the Latin Church, the chief 'Rule of Faith' is found in the 'Apostles' Creed, and in this there is no clause which even remotely suggests Divine indwelling—an omission which is significant of the small place which this idea has held in Western Christianity as a whole.

The relation of God to the world is generally described in the later forms of Western Creeds by the term 'Creator'; and in the Eastern Creeds by the similar term ποιητής, both of which suggest creation from without, rather than from within.

In defining the relation of God to Jesus Christ, the Creed of the Council of Nicaea used the following terms, which differentiate this from the normal relation of God to other souls, which have been 'made' by Him:

[1] Among the more important of the early Creeds were the following:

(*a*) In the West: The '*Apostles' Creed*', a large part of which dates from the second century, and was finally adopted in its present form throughout the Western Church in the eighth century.

(*b*) In the East: (i) The *original Creed of Nicaea*, A.D. 325; (ii) The *Creed of Lucian*, adopted by the Council of Antioch, A.D. 341; and (iii) The *Revised Creed of Jerusalem*, adopted by the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381, and called 'The Nicene Creed' in the formularies of the English Church.

These creeds were based upon early Baptismal Confessions of Faith, which varied slightly from one Church to another.

The original texts of these creeds and confessions will be found in T. H. Bindley's *Œcumenical Documents of the Faith*, London, 1906, from which the extracts in the text are taken.

One Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God;
Begotten as the Only-begotten out of (ἐκ) the Father;
God out of God, Light out of Light, True God out of True God;
Begotten, not made (γεννηθὲις οὗ ποιηθὲις),
Of one substance (ὁμοούσιος) with the Father;
Through whom (δί οὗ) all things were made.[1]

Further, an anathema was added to the Creed by the Council of Nicaea against any who should call him 'created' (κτηστός); and in the fifth century this anathema was extended to all who should think of Christ as 'one who carries God within him', or as 'a man energized by the Word', or as 'a man glorified by the Spirit'[2]—phrases which are constantly used to describe the indwelling of God in Christians.[3] Thus the credal definitions of the relation of God to Christ definitely place the latter in a distinct category. It is true that the Creeds affirm that Christ was really 'made man' and 'made flesh';[4] but this process is defined by later theologians as a unique one, not parallel to the indwelling of God in any individual human being, but an 'assumption of impersonal humanity' by the Person of God Himself.[5] However we may interpret this difficult concept, it again places the Incarnation of God in Christ in a category quite separate from the manifold indwellings of God in the hearts of His human children.

With regard to the Holy Spirit, who in modern theology is viewed specially as 'the Indweller', the earliest creeds (e.g., the 'Apostles' Creed' and the original Creed of Nicaea) simply affirmed belief 'in the Holy Spirit', without further definition. In the Nicene Creed as revised at Constantinople, He is described

[1] Bindley, op. cit., p. 17; or F. J. Foakes-Jackson, *History of the Christian Church*, Cambridge, 1909 edition, p. 314.

[2] See the Anathemas (v, vii and ix) at the close of St. Cyril of Alexandria's *Third Letter to Nestorius*; quoted in Bindley, pp. 132, 269 ff.

[3] Ignatius repeatedly calls himself 'Theophoros' (God-bearer); and for the other phrases, see (e.g.) Col. i, 29; Rom. viii, 30.

[4] So the Creed of Nicaea: 'σαρκώθεις, ἐνανθρώπησας.'

[5] 'The Scripture hath not declared that the Word united to Himself a man's person, but that He hath become Flesh.' (St. Cyril's *Second Letter to Nestorius*; quoted in Bindley, pp. 107, 256.) Cf. Darwell Stone, *Outlines of Christian Dogma*, London, 1915, p. 77: 'Christ did not take possession of an independent human personality.'

more particularly as 'The Life-giver, who spake by the prophets'; and in the Creed of Epiphanius (*c.* A.D. 374), as 'He who dwells in (οἰκῶὲν) the saints'. But neither in these phrases nor anywhere in the actual text of the early creeds, can we trace any significant development of the Christian doctrine of Divine indwelling.

*The indirect influence of the Creeds and Councils.* Indirectly, however, the Creeds, and the general principles accepted by the Œcumenical Councils, did affect this development, along several lines of great importance. In the first place, the formal acceptance of Scripture and the Creeds as the unchangeable standard of Christian Doctrine implied a principle which came to be clearly enunciated several centuries later by St. Thomas Aquinas; viz., that there is a fundamental difference between the 'Revealed Truths' therein contained, and the facts which may be discovered by the natural explorations of the human mind. The latter are only relatively true; the former are absolute and final. This great dualism between 'natural' and 'revealed' religion came to dominate Christian thought for many centuries; and where it is held, a unified, 'monistic' conception of the universe and of God's relation to it is difficult, if not impossible. For the Divine indwelling comes to be thought of as concentrated (or even confined) within the sphere of 'revealed religion' and its organized expression in the Church; and whatever measure of Divine indwelling may be found outside of this is of a lower order altogether, and comparatively unimportant for humanity.

Further, the decisions of the Councils marked the condemnation of many of the old ideas of Greek philosophy, particularly its monistic tendency, and also brought to an end the attempts to harmonize the Gospel with the Neo-Platonic attempt to safeguard the pure Transcendence of God.[1] At the same time, the Creeds incorporated some of the terms of Greek philosophy into the Christian definitions of the Godhead —terms such as 'substance' (οὐσία), 'essence' (ὑπόστασις), 'reciprocal sharing of attributes' (κοινωνία ἰδιωμάτων), etc.—which fostered the conception of God as consisting of some static,

[1] 'The Council of Nicaea', says Gwatkin, 'marks the abandonment by the Church of pure Transcendentalism'.—Op. cit, Vol. I, p. 308.

quasi-material substance, and humanity as another substance. This conception naturally carried with it the idea of Divine indwelling as a process which is best described in physical terms —'infusion', 'conveying', 'containing'—rather than in terms of personal influence or 'suggestion'; and it was often implied that the latter terms are less 'real' than the former. Athanasius regarded this tendency as dangerous, and urges: 'Let every corporal inference be banished on this subject.'[1] But lesser men were not always so careful to guard against material conceptions.

The Dogma of 'creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo*)' which we noticed in the Apologists, came about this time to be recognized as an essential part of Christian orthodoxy, and was accepted by both the rival schools, 'Creationist' and 'Traducianist',[2] which only differed from one another with regard to the process by which souls have come into being since the first creation of the world. Creation was thus separated from the normal processes of the natural world, and regarded as a unique, once-for-all act of the Divine Will, bringing about the existence of something where nothing existed before. The presence and activity of the Creator consequently came to be limited to certain supernatural events; in particular, the first creation of the world once and for all, followed after a long while by the Incarnation once and for all in the person of Jesus Christ, and the extension of the Incarnation through the Church and her Sacraments.

## B. The Growing Division Between Eastern and Western Christianity

The great Councils of the fourth and fifth centuries are known as 'Œcumenical' (world-wide); and on the whole they did represent the general mind of the Church, though not without some ruthless suppression of minorities.

But even before the end of the fourth century, we begin to

[1] *On Doctrines*, v, 24.

[2] For Creationism and Traducianism, see (e.g.) J. Macpherson's translation of Kurtz's *Church History*, Vol. I, London, 1891, p. 344. Modern theologians of the traditional school generally insist that creation *ex nihilo* is an essential dogma of Christianity. See (e.g.) Darwell Stone, op. cit., p. 31.

find signs of the great cleavage between East and West,[1] which was partly due to the political division of the Empire into rival monarchies at Rome and Constantinople from A.D. 395 onwards, and which culminated in the formal breach of communion between the Eastern and Western Churches in A.D. 1054, when Pope Leo IX pronounced the Patriarch Michael of Constantinople and his followers, to be 'Anathema Maranatha, with Arians, . . . Donatists, Manichees . . . and all heretics;—yea, with the Devil and his angels!'[2]

This separation of organization led to the development of two distinct types of theology in East and West, each claiming to preserve the authoritative teaching of Scripture and the Creeds. Broadly speaking, in the East the emphasis was laid primarily on correctness of doctrine (Orthodoxy), while the West was more concerned with correctness of organization (Catholicity).

We may now trace briefly the history of the Doctrine of Divine Indwelling along these two traditions, and the distinctive features of each.

### C. The Orthodox Tradition of the Eastern Churches

This is a field of study little known to English students; but from editions and translations of the Greek Fathers, and a few modern books,[3] certain characteristics stand out fairly clearly.

In the first place, we find a constant emphasis on *the essential kinship between God, Man and the World, and the capacity of human nature to become deified through Christ.* The Theological Committee of the Faith and Order Movement, in their *Report* (1931)[4] speak of the 'robust optimism' which characterizes the Eastern Fathers, in contrast to the 'pessimism' of the Western Church with regard to the corruption of man and the world.

[1] E.g., see Basil's *Letter lxvi to Athanasius of Alexandria* (*The Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. XIII).

[2] W. F. Adeney, *The Greek and Eastern Churches*, Edinburgh, 1908, p. 241.

[3] E.g., *The Library of the Nicene and Ante-Nicene Fathers*, London, 1894, etc., from which the quotations from the Eastern Fathers, are taken; also S. Zankov, *The Eastern Orthodox Church*, London, 1929; N. Callenicos, *The Great Orthodox Catechism*, London, 1922; also N. Arseniev and N. N. Gloubokowsky in *The Doctrine of Grace*, London, 1932.

[4] See *The Doctrine of Grace*, pp. 3 ff.

Certainly, the thought of the goodness of God's creation, and its essential affinity with its Maker, is a frequent theme of orthodox writers, and leads them to a wide conception of the Divine Presence in all the universe.

This is clearly marked in Athanasius (Bishop of Alexandria, 325–373) who, while honoured in East or West alike, was in many ways the first typical theologian of the Eastern Church; and also in the three Cappadocian Fathers, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen and Gregory of Nyssa, whose teaching dominated the trend of Eastern Orthodox theology during the latter half of the fourth century. They all, while maintaining firmly that God is transcendent and 'self-existent, enclosing all things, but enclosed by none',[1] also affirm the universality of the Divine immanence, with an emphasis rarely to be found either in the early Church (apart from the School of Alexandria), or in the Church of the West. Basil says:

> All is full-filled by the Holy Spirit, . . . both unintelligent and intelligent creation; the Spirit from everywhere pervades it, flowing into, penetrating and enlightening it.[2]

Again, Athanasius likens the indwelling of God in the world to the indwelling of a man's soul in his body:

> As the whole body is quickened and illumined by one man, and man's power is even in the toe, . . . so the Logos of God is in the whole universe. . . . As mind, pervading all through, is interpreted by a part of the body (the tongue); so the Word, pervading all things, has used a human instrument.[3]

Athanasius further supplements this metaphor with those of a conductor who inspires (and may be even said to indwell) the performers, and of a ruler whose will pervades his whole city or state.[4] Such illustrations suggest that the Incarnation of God in Christ is organically one with the Divine indwelling in all creation, and does not belong to an altogether different category.[5]

[1] Athanasius, *Doctrines*, iii, 11. [2] *Against Eunomius*, v.
[3] *On the Incarnation*, xlii. [4] *Against the Heathens*, xli, xlii.
[5] At the same time, Athanasius insists that God is *more* than the totality of the word (*Against the Heathens*, xxviii), and teaches that Creation was *ex nihilo* (*On the Incarnation*, iii). Basil likens the work of Creation to that of a potter, 'done suddenly' (*Hexaemeron*, I, iv).

This leads naturally to another great fundamental of the gospel of Athanasius—that through the Incarnation, man is uplifted to and united with the Divine.

> God became man, so that we men might become God.[1]

Western theologians have generally shrunk from such language, lest it should seem to obscure the essential gulf between Creator and creature; but among the Orthodox Fathers of the East, the idea recurs frequently.[2]

From such passages, we see that many of the teachers of the Eastern Orthodox Church held a wide view of Divine indwelling, akin to that of the School of Alexandria. They taught that God is essentially one with His creation, interpenetrating it in all its parts, as spirit indwells a body;[3] and that this process is seen at its highest in Christ, through whom Christian souls are reunited with God, from Whom they had become separated through their own sin.

But there is another aspect of orthodox theology.

*The necessity of the Church and Sacraments.* In practice, this wide theory of Divine indwelling is greatly limited by the insistence of the Orthodox Church upon the absolute necessity of the ministry and Sacraments of the Church, as unique, divinely-appointed channels of the Divine presence and grace—an insistence scarcely less rigid than that of the Church of Rome.

For instance, Basil, although (as we have just seen) in theory he recognizes the indwelling of the Divine Spirit in all creation, nevertheless in practice denies that the grace of God can be given outside the Orthodox Church and its ministry:

[1] Θεὸς ἐνανθρώπησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν. *On Doctrines*, iii, 14; *Discourses Against the Arians*, I, xi, 39, etc.; *On Synods*, 50.

[2] E.g., Macarius 'the Blessed' (one of the most revered of the ascetic monks of Egypt in the fourth century), writes: 'Grace is congenial to human nature; through grace, man becomes deified.' (*Homily* xxvi, 1, 2). And Basil says: 'Souls wherein the Holy Spirit dwells become spiritual; hence comes the "being-made-like-to-god", and (highest of all) the "being-made-God".' (*On the Spirit*, ix.)

[3] Cyril of Jerusalem (A.D. 315-381) says that while God's grace is 'embodied in the Church', it also extends to the outermost depths of the underworld. (*Catechism*, xviii, 25; vi, 11).

> Those who have apostasized from the Church no longer have in them the grace of the Holy Spirit; for it ceased to be imparted when the continuity was broken. They [the schismatic priests] have become laymen, and no longer have the authority to baptize, nor to lay on hands; neither are they able to confer on others that grace of the Holy Spirit from which they have fallen away.[1]

Thus in the Orthodox Eastern Church, we find two tendencies side by side, which are not always easy to reconcile with each other: on the one hand, a theoretical recognition of the Divine indwelling in all created things, and on the other hand, an insistence that in practice the Divine Presence can be received, as valid, saving grace, only through the ministry and sacraments of the Church.[2]

### D. The Catholic Tradition of Western Christendom

If the central emphasis of the Eastern Church has been laid upon orthodoxy, in the Western Church it has been laid upon organization, and the duty of loyalty to the authority of the Church and its hierarchy. The beginnings of this Latin tradition are found, not at Rome, but in North Africa; and we have already noticed in some of the great African Christians, such as Tertullian and Cyprian,[3] that stern 'exclusive' tendency to limit the Divine activity to the Church, which ultimately has become an essential part of Roman Catholicism.

In the latter part of the fourth century, the two most famous teachers of the Western Church were Hilary of Poitiers (A.D. 300–367), and Ambrose of Milan (A.D. 340–397). But neither of these deals at length with the doctrine of Divine indwelling. They are however careful to distinguish the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ from the indwelling of the Divine Spirit in other men.[4]

[1] *Classical Epistles*, I; cf. Letter clxxxviii, 1, *Concerning the Canons*.

[2] For a modern Orthodox expression of the Doctrine of Sacramental Grace, see Prof. H. S. Alivisatos of Athens, in *The Doctrine of Grace*, p. 256, in which he also gives a catena of quotations from the Fathers of the Orthodox Church.

[3] See above, pp. 130, 136.

[4] Hilary describes the birth of Christ as 'a creation', i.e., a process in which the Virgin Mary did not communicate to Him anything of her human substance; but He took upon Himself 'Universal Humanity' (*De Trinitate*,

*Augustine* (A.D. 354–430). In Augustine of Hippo, we meet the noblest flower of the African-Latin tradition; a mind of keen insight and rich learning, and a spirit capable both of tender affection and relentless sternness; one who 'in a supreme spiritual experience had fused Platonism and Puritanism'.[1]

In many respects, Augustine, with his long training in the schools of Neo-Platonism and Manichaeism, is more truly philosophical than any other of the Fathers of the Church. He was familiar with the idea of Divine immanence, and had pondered long over the problems raised by it.

> Do heaven and earth contain Thee, since Thou fillest them? . . . Since all things cannot contain Thee wholly, do they contain *part* of Thee?[2]
>
> Is there aught in me that can contain Thee? . . . Why do I seek that Thou shouldst enter into me, who would not exist, didst not Thou exist in me?[3]

He tells us how he used to picture the indwelling of God in a material way:

> Thee, O Lord, I imagined on every part environing and penetrating the mass of Thy creation, . . . as though there were one only Boundless Sea, and it contained within Itself some sponge, huge indeed, but bounded, and all its parts filled from the Immeasurable Sea.[4]

But the conception of 'spatial' indwelling did not satisfy him; for then (he says) 'God would be more in the elephant than in the gnat';[5] and he was led at length to conceive of God as 'Spirit—not one whose being is in bulk'.[6]

The philosophical note is also apparent in Augustine's exposition of creation. He is emphatically theistic, insisting that the Creator is essentially 'altogether other than' His

iii, 19; xii, 50; ii, 24). Ambrose *contrasts* the 'abiding' of the Spirit *in* Christ with the 'pouring out' of the Spirit *upon* ordinary men (*De Spiritu Sancto*, i, 7). (The writings of Hilary and Ambrose are translated in Vols. IX and X of *The Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*.)

[1] R. Manson, *Dogma in History and Thought*, p. 107.

[2] *Confessions*, I, 3. The extracts are take from Dr Pusey's translation of the *Confessions*, 1838 (Everyman's Library edition, 1907).

[3] Ibid., I, 2. [4] Ibid., VII, 5.

[5] Or, 'than in the sparrow' (*passer*); ibid., VII, 1.

[6] Ibid., III, vii.

creatures, and that creation was an act of the Divine free will, effected by His Command or Word, and not required by any other necessity:

> What could have been wanting to Thy Good, although all these creatures should never have been? Thou madest [them], not out of any want, but out of the fulness of Thy goodness.[1]

Yet the Creative Word has not passed away, but is being spoken eternally (XI, 6, 7); and this suggests that Creation is an eternal process:

> The Seventh Day hath no evening nor setting . . . Thou, O Lord, ever workest, and art ever at rest. Nor dost Thou see for a time, nor art moved for a time, nor dost rest for a time; and yet Thou makest the things that are seen in time.[2]

This is a far profounder conception of creation than that which is customary in the early Church, and approaches much more nearly to the idea of creation as a continuous manifestation of the Divine indwelling.

But the heart of Augustine's message as a Christian is found, not in his philosophy, but in his experience of salvation; and here he is typical of the Western tradition. In place of the 'robust optimism' of the Eastern theologians, we find in him an overwhelming sense of sin, which is overcome only by a still more overwhelming experience of the Divine grace and forgiveness, so amazing as to be almost incredible. Augustine lays stress, not upon the 'essential kinship of God and man',[3] or the 'congeniality' of grace; but rather upon the utter contrast between the two, and the amazing wonder of the Love which has bridged the gulf, and has actually come to save and indwell the sinful human heart:

> Who shall procure Thee to enter into my heart? . . . My soul's house is too strait for Thee to come into; Let it be enlarged by Thee! It is ruinous; do Thou repair it! There be many things in it, I know, which may offend Thine eyes; but who can cleanse it? To whom but Thee shall I cry? Cleanse me, O Lord, from my secret sins![4]

[1] *Confessions*, xiii, 4; cf. XI, 5. [2] Op. cit., xiii, 36, 37.

[3] In one passage indeed, he says of Christians: *Christus facti sumus* (1 *Joh.*, Tract XXI, 8); but this is a pure supernatural 'act of grace'.

[4] Op. cit., I, 5.

Very far removed is this from any facile assertion of universal Divine immanence, or any purely intellectual conception of it. With Augustine, all such ideas are checked, and in a sense limited, by his own experience of evil without and sin within; and the Divine presence, though an overwhelming reality, is none the less an incredible paradox. Even when he experiences ineffable states of mystical union with God, fear is mingled with the bliss:

> I tremble, and I burn; I tremble, feeling that I am unlike Him; I burn, feeling that I am like Him.[1]

It is not only by his *Confessions* that Augustine has contributed to the Christian conception of the indwelling of God. His last great book, *The City of God*, was written just after the fall of Rome before Alaric the Goth, in A.D. 410. 'Hardly any book', says Foakes-Jackson, 'has so profoundly influenced Western Christianity. The idea of the Christian Society being the City of God was never absent from the medieval mind, and prevailed long after the Reformation. It caused that sharp distinction between sacred and profane which still has so much influence.'[2]

Augustine is too great a man to be brought under the label of any party or school of thought. His intellect was clear and penetrating; and his volcanic spiritual experience reminds us of great independent souls such as St. Paul or Luther. At the same time, his conception of the Church as 'the City of God', or 'the Ark' outside of which there is no salvation, was not without its dangers; for in the hands of lesser men it was made to justify a rigid limitation of the Divine activity within the bounds of an external Church-organization.

*The Dark Ages.* After Augustine, the Western Church entered upon a period singularly barren of great names or profound thinkers; and this lasted for some eight centuries, during which the leaders of the Church were for the most part content to repeat the phrases of Scripture and the Creeds, with but little attempt to explore their deeper meaning, or to break fresh lines of thought.

[1] *Confessions*, xi, 9.

[2] Op. cit., p. 514. For *The City of God*, see John Healey's translation, 3 vols., London, 1931.

Teachers who ventured to depart from the traditional forms of words and thought were quickly suppressed, and especially any who tended towards an immanentist philosophy. Among these was John Scotus Erigena (*c.* A.D. 810–880), who taught that 'God is the totality of all things that are', and that His creative activity is co-eternal with His existence.[1] In dealing with Divine grace, Erigena declined to differentiate sharply between the natural power (*virtus*) of man and the gift (*donum*) that comes to him from God.[2] Such views, if recognized within the Church, would have allowed for the development of a very wide conception of God's indwelling in the world; but this was not permitted by the guardians of the Faith.

Later on, in the twelfth century, Abelard (d. A.D. 1142), definitely challenged the claim of the Catholic Church to be the sole and perfect repository of the Divine presence, by affirming that 'the Divine indwelling is partial everywhere, but perfect nowhere':—a striking anticipation of the views put forward by thinkers of the Renaissance and subsequent ages.[3] This again opened the way for a wide conception of Divine immanence. But Abelard too was condemned by the Church; and the Catholic tradition continued to claim for the Church the entire 'deposit' of Revealed Truth and Divine Grace, barely recognizing, in a formal way, the possibilities of a few 'uncovenanted mercies' in the realms outside.

*The Middle Ages.* From the eleventh century onwards, a revival of learning became manifest throughout the Western Church; but it was a learning which kept carefully within the limits prescribed by Catholic orthodoxy, and followed the scholastic methods of deduction from the 'given' dogmas of Revealed Truth. The idea of a fundamental Dualism between the natural and the supernatural governs all the thought of this age.

*St. Anselm.* A notable example of this is St. Anselm

[1] Scotus Erigena, *De Divisione Naturae*, I, 72: 'For God, to exist (*esse*) and to create (*facere*) are the same thing.' See also Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, pp. 132 ff.

[2] See *The Doctrine of Grace*, p. 137.

[3] For Abelard, see (e.g.) H. Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, Oxford, 1895, or C. C. J. Webb, *Studies in the History of Natural Theology*, Oxford, 1915, pp. 199–232.

(A.D. 1033–1109), known as 'the Father of Scholasticism'. He associates the ideas of the Divine presence entirely with the once-for-all Incarnation in Jesus Christ, and with the extension of this Incarnation through the Sacraments, which convey to men's souls the supernatural gift. Outside this sphere, he recognizes no salvation, and no real experience of God's presence.[1]

*St. Thomas Aquinas.* Medieval Scholasticism reaches its climax in St. Thomas Aquinas (A.D. 1225–1274). Clear and cogent as his reasoning is, it keeps strictly within the limits of the dogmas and authority of the Church, and consistently maintains the essential Dualism between natural religion and Revealed Religion, and between natural virtues and the supernatural Gift of Grace.

In the sphere of natural religion, St. Thomas Aquinas takes Aristotle as his basis; and indeed he secured for Aristotle a position recognized by the Church as authoritative within that sphere.[2] Platonic influence is also evident in St. Thomas, especially in his doctrine of the pre-existence of the ideas of all things in the mind of God.[3] But by placing alongside of all these a sphere of Revealed Religion, in which truths which cannot be grasped by Reason are revealed to Faith, St. Thomas is able to teach doctrines which Aristotle and Plato never knew.

The doctrine of Divine immanence is expounded at length by St. Thomas, in the section of the *Summa* entitled 'Of the Existence of God in all things'.[4] In this he lays down four propositions; (1) that God is in all things; (2) that God is everywhere; (3) that He is everywhere by His Presence, Essence and Power; and (4) that it belongs essentially to God (*proprium Dei est*) to be everywhere. He guards himself against the idea that the Divine indwelling is corporal or dimensional, so that part of God could be in one place, and part in another; and bids us

[1] *Cur Deus Homo*, i, 25. Cf. A. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, Vol. VI, English translation, Edinburgh, 1894, p. 70, and C. C. J. Webb, op. cit., pp. 156–98.

[2] See *St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Fr C. Lattey, S.J., Cambridge, 1925, Chap. iii; or Webb, pp. 233–91.

[3] *Summa*, Part I, Q. XV, 'On Ideas'. The references are to the Paris (1855) text of the *Summa*. A good short work on St. Thomas is M. C. D'Arcy's *Thomas Aquinas*, London, 1930.

[4] *Summa*, Part I, Q. VIII.

think of the Divine presence everywhere as that of Agent (*Agens*) and Power (*Virtus*).

But in spite of this thorough-going conception of Divine immanence, St. Thomas's recognition of 'God in everything' is in practice modified by several considerations:

1. He carefully distinguishes this universal indwelling from God's *creative* activity. He defines creation as 'making something out of nothing', and limits it to a period in the past, after which God ceased to create, and rested, self-sufficient and self-blessed.[1] Herein he differs from all philosophers who link together the processes of creation and evolution as an organic whole which is the expression of continuous Divine activity.

2. He denies that human souls are 'of the substance of God', or pre-existent before their bodies. They and their bodies are created together, by 'immediate Divine act'.[2] This cuts away the idea of the Divine indwelling in man as an expression of the essential oneness of the human and the Divine; and makes the gift of grace a free-will act of the Divine graciousness towards man.

3. St. Thomas, like other philosophers, was evidently perplexed to know how to define the relation of the all-pervading God to evil. The *Summum Bonum* (he says) cannot be the cause of evil, 'except by accident' (*accidens*); and in reply to the question, 'Is God in dæmons?' he replies: 'Their nature is from God: their deformity comes from themselves;'[3] a reply which can hardly be said to solve the problem.

4. When St. Thomas passes from his rather academic treatment of the universal immanence of God to describe His presence in the Incarnate Christ, or in the rites of the Church, we are conscious of a change of atmosphere, and a new sense of real religious *values*; in contrast with which his idea of the presence of God outside the Church appears but a shadowy theory, of little importance for the soul of man.

The Incarnation of God in Christ is for St. Thomas an event entirely unique and without parallel; 'essentially different

[1] *Summa*, Part I, Q. XLV, and Q. LXXIII. [2] Op. cit., Part I, Q. XC.
[3] Op. cit., Part I, Q. XLIX, and Q. VIII.

from the ordinary imparting of Divine grace to men' (*non secundum aliquam gratiam habitualem*);[1] and to be believed solely by faith.[2]

But while God was in Christ by a 'higher gift than grace', grace, in its turn, belongs to a realm that is higher than nature. It is not 'of the same substance with' those virtues which exist 'by nature', but is a Divine gift which can be received only through the sacraments of the Church, being 'contained' in them, as an effect is contained in its instrumental cause.[3] The sacraments bestow 'character'—not in the sense of moral virtues (which, St. Thomas says, are not 'pertinent' to spiritual union with God,[4] but in the sense of an invisible spiritual quality (*qualitas*) or 'power' (*potestas*), which may be conferred and received without the conscious knowledge of the recipient.[5] This conception of Grace as a mysterious 'substance' infused into the soul through sacramental rites, has remained central in Catholicism from the middle ages to the present day, and has also influenced certain types of Protestant thought and teaching.

In the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas we find perhaps the most comprehensive exposition of the typically Catholic doctrine of the Divine indwelling. Even if it be true (as Professor Gwatkin maintains) that the fundamental Dualism of Aquinas's position has been 'wiped out' by modern science,[6] nevertheless it still forms the basis of a great deal of Christian teaching today, and its historical importance is very great.

For several centuries after St. Thomas Aquinas, Catholic theology shows few notable developments. Perhaps the best-known names in this period are those of some of the great saints and mystics. Many of these expressed their spiritual experience in terms of Immanentism, or even of Monism, which will merit our later study.[7] But while they were mostly submissive to the discipline and doctrine of the Church, and avoided any direct challenge to it, they had but little influence upon the main tradition and formulas of the Church. So, before we consider the medieval mystics, it may be well to indicate

[1] *Summa*, Part III, Q. II, 10,
[2] Op. cit., Q. II, 1, 2, 3.
[3] Op. cit., Q. XII, 2; Part II, Q. CX.
[4] Op. cit., Part II, Q. CLXXX.
[5] Op. cit., Q. CXII; Part III, Q. LXII, LXIII.
[6] *The Knowledge of God*, Vol. II, p. 288.
[7] See below, pp. 159 ff.

the further development of the official Catholic doctrine in regard to Divine indwelling.

*The Council of Trent* (A.D. 1545–1563). The Decrees of the Council of Trent may be regarded from one point of view as the logical and natural climax of tendencies that we have already noted in Medieval Catholicism. But they were also a 'manifesto' of the Counter-Reformation; and their specific form and language were determined by the Protestant doctrines which they were designed to condemn.

The conception of Divine immanence in the world at large was not a controversial issue on this occasion, and is therefore not dealt with in detail in the Decrees. But the Doctrine of Divine Indwelling in the human soul through Sacramental Grace is carefully defined, in opposition to the Protestant claims.[1] The gist of the Tridentine Doctrine is as follows:

1. The term 'Grace' does not (as the Protestants maintained) indicate the general 'graciousness' of God towards man. That may be expressed in various ways and through various channels; but 'Grace' denotes an invisible 'substance', which is contained in and under sacramental rites and elements, and nowhere else, and is conveyed to the soul through these, and in no other way.

2. 'Grace' is not to be identified with moral qualities—love, joy, peace, and so forth. These are 'natural' virtues, manifest even outside the Church: but 'Grace' is a unique, supernatural 'infusion', invisibly imparted and unconsciously received, without which the soul cannot attain to salvation.

As illustrations of this conception of Grace, we may quote a few extracts from the Tridentine Decrees:

> If anyone saith:
>
> That grace is only the favour of God (*Sess.*, VI, Canon 6);
>
> That Baptism is not necessary to salvation (*De Bapt.*, V);
>
> That the Sacraments do not contain the grace which they supply, or confer the grace on those who do not place an obstacle thereto (*Sess.*, VII, Canon 6);
>
> That in the Eucharist, the whole Christ is not contained, under each species, and in every part of each species (*Sess.*, XIII, Canon 3);

[1] The Decrees on Grace are found especially under §§ VI, VII and XIII. (The quotations are from the English translation in P. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. II, New York, 1890, pp. 77–206.

> That Christ in the Eucharist is eaten spiritually only, and not truly, really and substantially (*Sess.*, XIII, Canons 1 and 8):—LET HIM BE ANATHEMA!

Here we have the kernel of the Catholic doctrine of Divine indwelling, pictured as intensely real, sharply defined, and operating after the manner of a physical process, so that even the simplest mind can receive a clear impression of it. At the same time, in practice at least, it carries with it certain negative implications. An intense faith in the Real Presence in sacrament or consecrated element is not always associated with a keen consciousness of the Divine in the world at large; indeed, only a few rare spirits are able to combine a concentrated devotion to the Presence in the sanctuary with a wide awareness of the Presence in all creation.

It may be noted that, when the affirmation of the reality of the indwelling presence takes the form of the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, the process of indwelling is really annulled.[1] For in that case 'that which is indwelt' ceases to exist, and is simply *replaced* by another substance; which was the official Doctrine of the Council of Trent:

> If any man saith that the substance of the bread and wine, after consecration, remains conjointly with the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ:—LET HIM BE ANATHEMA!
>
> —*Sess.*, XIII, Canon 2.

Apart from this rather paradoxical climax of the growing emphasis on the Indwelling Presence in the Eucharist, the general conception of Divine indwelling in the Decrees of Trent is that of a very objective, very clear-cut, but sharply limited process; and this has remained the authorized statement of Roman Catholic doctrine ever since.

### E. THE MEDIEVAL MYSTICS

Before passing on to the Doctrine of the Reformed Churches, we may now go back a little, to consider a type of piety which

[1] Similarly we noticed that in Hindu Monism, the idea of Divine indwelling was finally *lost*, when a relentless logic completely indentified 'that which indwells' with 'that which is indwelt'. See above, p. 40 f.

grew up and persisted for several centuries in the medieval Church, accepting loyally its doctrine and discipline, but pursuing its own distinctive methods in 'the Practice of the Presence of God'.

Mysticism of some sort must have a place in all religion that is not merely formal or purely intellectual.[1] In the Christian tradition, it finds clear expression in the New Testament, especially in St. John and St. Paul; and later in the Alexandrians, the Cappadocians, and (notably) in St. Augustine. But never perhaps has Christian Mysticism been seen in more striking form than in the medieval saints.

Mysticism may be of various types. The goal of the mystic is, indeed, always the same—spiritual union with God; but this may, or may not, involve the absorption of the individual in the Deity; and it may, or may not, require the retention of moral qualities in the state of bliss. The way of the mystic, too, is not the same in all cases. Some approach God through His creation, as Nature-mystics; others reach Him by emptying the soul of all thought and feeling. To some mystics, union with God is largely an intellectual concept; to others, it is an emotional experience, beyond words or thought. Again, the experience may be viewed primarily as the ascent of the soul to God, or as the descent of God into the soul. Indeed, both aspects are essential; for without the second, mysticism may be no more than auto-suggestion; while if the former is forgotten, God is likely to be viewed as 'In-breaker' rather than In-dweller, bursting in upon the soul as the 'Wholly Other', without any human co-operation, and remaining a purely transcendent and unknowable God.[2] But true Mysticism is nearly always akin to Immanentism, at least so far as God's relation to man is concerned; for such a spiritual union as the mystics claim to experience is possible only if there is some real kinship between the human and the Divine. Mysticism is thus essentially optimistic, and tends to be monistic; and it has generally been

[1] The mystic, properly, is 'one who seeks by contemplation and self-surrender to obtain union with or absorption into the Deity' (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*). It is only in a secondary sense that it is contemptuously used for one who has an irrational love of the mysterious.

[2] See below, Chap. xiv, on Karl Barth.

suspect by those who stress the antithesis between God and the world, or between God and man.[1]

Even in the 'Dark Ages', Scotus Erigena, whom Dean Inge has called 'the last flower of Neo-Platonism',[2] had expressed a true Mysticism, largely philosophical in spirit. There were not many such flowers in that age; but in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries we meet with a rich outburst of mystical experience in the Western Church.

Outstanding among the medieval mystics were Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugo and Richard of St. Victor, Bonaventura and Albertus Magnus. They all lay stress upon the discipline necessary for the soul in its approach to God, and insist that the soul must first be emptied and closed against all sense-perceptions before God can enter into it. 'Nothing pleases God more than a mind free from all occupations and distractions. Such a mind, is, in a manner, transformed into God.'[3] The mystical union with God attained by these means is inevitably indescribable, and has little direct relation with either clear thought or active benevolence.

In the early fourteenth century, we find a notable mystic, Meister Eckhart, whom Dr Otto has recently studied in close connexion with the philosophy of Śaṅkara.[4] In some respects, the resemblance between the two thinkers is certainly very remarkable. Take these extracts from Eckhart, given in Otto's book:

> God is unlike to anything, and like to nothing; He is above Being; He is the Naught. (p. 24)
>
> God is Silence, rather than Speech. (p. 31)
>
> God is Being Itself, . . . without a second, . . . Unchangeable, without Quality, without Form, neither This nor That. (pp. 8–15)
>
> God is known to us only as 'the clothed Godhead, clad in difference and multiplicity'; but this is foreign to God Himself. (pp. 12–15)

What is all this, but the Advaita Monism of Śaṅkara, in slightly different terms?[5] And when we turn to Eckhart's

[1] See Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 26. [2] Op. cit., p. 134.
[3] Albertus Magnus, *De Adhaerendo Deo*, I; quoted in Inge, op. cit., p. 146.
[4] *Mysticism, East and West.* [5] See above, p. 40 f.

doctrine of the unity—or rather identity—of the human and the divine, he seems to echo the *Tat Tvam Asi*[1] of the Upanishads, in its most extreme form: 'God is the same one that I am' (p. 15); 'God made all things through me' (p. 100). At other times, Eckhart is more modest, and is content to say that at the apex of the human mind there is a 'Divine spark' (*'Diess Fünkelein, Das ist Gott'*).[2] But when he tells us that 'he who would grasp the Divine must estrange himself even from the good and the true' (p. 22), we feel that his system suffers from the same ethical weakness that characterized Śaṅkara's Advaita. Yet on the other hand, as Otto points out, there are notes in Eckhart which are distinctively Christian, and differentiate even 'this most monistic of all Christian thinkers' from anything to be found in Śaṅkara; notably his enthusiasm (or 'rage') for God (p. 180), and his summing-up of the goal of the soul in the one word 'Love' (p. 213).

At least, this comparison between two great minds, one Eastern and one Western, helps us to realize how deeply Mysticism is rooted in human nature, and how the mind of man, whatever tradition it may inherit, tends to approach the great problems of life along similar lines.

Almost contemporary with Eckhart (*c.* A.D. 1295–1380), were Ruysbroeck, Susa, Tauler, and the unknown author of the *Theologia Germanica*.[3] All these describe the process of mystical union with God as a 'deification of man'; thus reviving a favourite concept of Athanasius and many of the Easterns. They are careful however to associate the mystic vision with love and good works; and they all stress the Divine initiative in the process of mystical union. Thus Tauler:

> The Godhead bends and nakedly descends into the depths of the pure waiting soul, drawing it up into the uncreated Essence, so that the spirit becomes one with him. . . . No one can unite himself to God in emptiness without true love; no one can be holy without good works.[4]

Among English mystics of the fourteenth century, perhaps

[1] See above, p. 30 f. [2] Quoted by Inge, op. cit., p. 156.

[3] St. Thomas á Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ* in the following century is intensely devotional, but hardly comes properly under the heading of Mysticism. [4] Inge, op. cit., p. 189 f., 194.

the best-known is the Lady Julian of Norwich, who has recorded in quaint language the visions seen by her in A.D. 1373. Though her primary motive was not philosophical, she was led to ponder deeply over the meaning of life. With all her intense experience of spiritual union with God, she never loses the sense of the Divine Transcendence as the 'background' of His indwelling in her soul, and the entire dependence of the creature upon Creator. Even in the climax of 'spiritual marriage' between the soul and God, this eternal distinction is maintained:

> Thus shall we come into our Lord; our Self clearly knowing, and God fully having; and we shall endlessly be all had in God; Him verily seeing and fully feeling, Him spiritually hearing, Him delectably in-breathing, and Him sweetly drinking. . . .
>
> He showed me a little thing, the quantity of an hazelnut, in the palm of mine hand. '*What may this be?*' It was answered: '*It is all that is made*' [i.e. all creation]. I marvelled how it might last; for methought it might all have fallen to naught for littleness. I was answered: *It lasteth, and ever shall*: for that God loveth it.[1]

The Lady Julian is one of the few Christian saints who speak of the *Motherhood* of God in relation to His creation: 'The fair lovely word "mother" is so sweet that it may not verily be said of none but HIM.'[2] It would be hard to find a more beautiful expression of the Christian experience of the indwelling God in the soul than is offered us by the Lady Julian. With all the freshness (and at times, boldness) of her language, she never inclines towards any defection from Catholic orthodoxy. She does indeed condemn certain popular forms of devotion, but adds: 'It is good meekly and mightily to be fastened to our Mother, the Church—that is, Christ Jesus.'[3]

In the Spanish mystics of the sixteenth century—St. Teresa, St. Juan of the Cross, etc.—the experience of the indwelling God is pictured in more sombre guise. The emptiness and self-crucifixion of the soul must be utter; the 'obscure night' through which the soul must pass on its way to God must be black without ray of light. Yet at the same time, the joy of the mystic Vision and Union is ineffable beyond words. St. Juan,

[1] R. H. Thouless, *The Lady Julian*, London, 1924, pp. 88, 90.
[2] Ibid., p. 103. Cf. Inge, op. cit., p. 202. [3] Thouless, op. cit., p. 94.

especially, has no appreciation of earthly things, or human love, as 'stepping-stones to God':

> God in this life is like Night. We ought to seek for bitterness rather than sweetness in God. There is no essential likeness or communion between God and the creature. Created things cannot serve as a ladder to God; they are only a hindrance and a snare.[1]

Here the negative type of Mysticism finds extreme expression, and brings us curiously near to the extreme Transcendentalism which has come to the fore in our own day.[2]

At the other extreme of mystical types stand the 'Nature Mystics', among whom we may class St. Francis of Assisi, with his *Canticle to the Sun*:

> Praised be my Lord God with all creatures; and specially our brother the Sun; O Lord, he signifies to us Thee:
> Praised be my Lord for our sister the Moon;
> Praised be my Lord for our brother the Wind;
> Praised be my Lord for our sister Water;
> Praised be my Lord for our brother Fire;
> Praised be my Lord for our mother the Earth![3]

To him, the birds and beasts are 'the humble manifestations of Creative Force', and therefore entitled to have happiness.[4]

Here speaks surely a man who had learnt to find God through His creation, and to feel Him near thereby. But St. Francis stands very much alone in this respect, among the saints of the Church; indeed, the *Canticle* is so un-medieval that Sabatier has called it 'the most perfect utterance of *modern* religious sentiment'.[5] Generally speaking, Nature-mysticism in the Middle Ages tends to sit very loosely on the Church, and to be associated rather with the tradition of the Jewish cabbala, or with thinkers such as Paracelsus or Giordano Bruno, whose orthodoxy was very much called in question by the Church.[6]

Through all this wide variety of type, the medieval mystics offer us perhaps the most notable examples in the history of Christendom of intense personal experience of the indwelling

[1] Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 226. [2] See below, Chap. xiv.
[3] Sabatier's, *St. Francis of Assisi* (English translation by L. S. Houghton), p. 305 f. [4] See Inge, op. cit., Chap. viii.
[5] Sabatier, p. 167. [6] See below, pp. 180 ff.

God. With many of them, this experience is not thought out into a theology or a philosophy; and where it is thought out, the result is not always clearly related to the Catholic doctrine of Divine indwelling in the Sacraments. The two are left side by side, so that it has been said that medieval mysticism was 'sheltered by, rather than dependent upon' the Church.[1] But at least, the example of the medieval mystics shows that even the most rigid theological limitation of the Divine presence to authorized rites cannot check the human spirit from experiencing the indwelling of God along independent lines.—'The Spirit bloweth where it listeth.'

[1] Inge, *The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought*, London, 1927, p. 16.

# CHAPTER X

## THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE INDWELLING IN THE REFORMED CHURCHES

### A. The Teaching of the Reformers

*The Motives of the Reformation, and its Main Principles*

The great revolt against the medieval Church which took place in the sixteenth century affected every aspect of Christian thought and practice, including the doctrine of Divine Indwelling. The reformers, however, were not primarily philosophers, nor even theologians.[1] They derived their spiritual dynamic partly from a moral indignation against abuses which they saw within the Church on all sides, partly from a fresh experience of God in their own souls, and partly from a re-discovery of Scripture and the application of its teaching as a test of Christian doctrine.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the forerunners of the Reformation, such as Wyclif in England (*c.* 1320–84), and Hus on the Continent (*c.* 1369–1415), had been led by their zeal for practical reforms within the Church to attack the central medieval conception of the Church as the perfect repository of Divine truth and grace, and to replace it by the more nebulous idea of 'the True Church', consisting of an invisible sum-total of elect souls, the names and number of whom are known to God alone.[2] Such a conception of the Church, without external organization or boundaries, did not encourage any clear-cut limitation of the sphere of grace or of the Divine indwelling;

[1] Luther had a particular dislike for the Aristotelian philosophy which the medieval Church had sanctioned: 'In the Universities, the blind, heathen teacher, Aristotle, rules further even than Christ! . . . God sent him as a plague for our sins.'—*To the German Nobility*, V, p. 24 (trans. H. Wace and C. A. Buchheim, London, 1896).

[2] See McGiffert, *Protestant Thought before Kant*, London, 1911, p. 17. This idea of the 'Invisible Church' was not without warrant (strangely enough) from Augustine's *City of God*; see the Introduction to Healey's translation, p. xxiii.

and this became correspondingly undetermined and elastic among these early Reformers.

The great German Reformers of the sixteenth century were on the whole of a more conservative type. Melanchthon, for instance, says: 'We [the Reformers] have brought into the Church no new dogma, but we renew and illustrate the doctrine of the Catholic Church.'[1] Luther, in spite of his vehement invective against the medieval system, retained a great deal of medieval doctrine. The Swiss Reformers, Zwingli and Calvin, were more thorough-going, and in some respects anticipated the teachings of the more radical sects, such as the Socinians and Anabaptists of later times. So we find wide varieties of doctrine among the leaders of the Reformation; yet even amid these, certain distinctive doctrines of the Reformation can be discerned, some of which brought about far-reaching changes in the medieval doctrine of Divine indwelling.

*Grace as 'Graciousness' rather than as 'Substance'*

Central in the Protestant position was the claim that each individual believer can have direct personal access to God. This on the one hand cut away the basis of the claim of the Catholic priesthood to control and dispense the Divine grace, and on the other hand brought to the forefront the conception of God as Sovereign, in direct relation with every one of His creatures, as King, Judge, and Saviour; which in turn led to a transcendentalist, rather than an immanentist, conception of God and His relation to the world and to the believer. Calvin's description of God as 'infinitely transcending the world of created things, yet touching it at every point by His Law'[2] is fundamentally akin to the Old Testament, and also to Islam. Now when God is thus thought of as a transcendent Person, rather than as immanent Substance, His grace is no longer pictured as a 'thing', to be infused through sacramental rites, but rather as His graciousness, which may be expressed by Him as Sovereign in various ways, of which the Sacrament is but one among many. Thus Melanchthon says:

[1] *Corpus Reformatorum*, III, p. 222.

[2] Calvin, *Institutes*, I, i, 1. Cf. Mathew Tindal's picture of God as a Moral Governor outside the world, in Gwatkin, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 34.

> The scholastics have foully abused the holy word 'grace', in using it wrongly for a quality that is in the souls of the saints. . . . Grace is nothing but God's kindness toward us.[1]

It is true that Luther, while denying the doctrine of Transubstantiation in the Eucharist, at the same time insists that the Body and Blood of Christ are 'contained in and under' the bread and wine by a process of 'Consubstantiation';[2] and also that the water in Baptism 'is not mere common water, but a Water comprised in God's word and commandment, and thereby sanctified'.[3] Such phrases might suggest quasi-physical processes, and a quasi-material immanence of the Divine in the sacramental elements. Yet a careful study of Luther will show that his ideas are really far removed from the medieval conceptions. For one thing, he makes the Presence in the elements dependent solely on the word, or promise of God, and lays no stress upon the necessity for any particular form of consecration by the ritual act of a priest duly ordained by a bishop.[4] Luther, however, certainly stands nearest among the Reformers to the Catholic doctrine in this matter. Most of the other Reformers are more careful than he to guard against any suggestion of a material indwelling of God, and reiterate their conviction that it is purely 'spiritual', and is best conceived of as an indwelling of the Divine word or message to mankind.[5] Calvin, starting from the axiom that 'a physical body can only be in one place at a time', concludes that 'in the Lord's Supper, Christ is truly and efficaciously, but not physically, present . . . Christ, out of the substance of His flesh, breathes life into our souls, yea diffuses His own life into us; though the real flesh of Christ does not enter us'.[6]

[1] Quoted by H. H. Hermelink, in *The Doctrine of Grace*, London, 1932, p. 181.

[2] See, e.g., *The Greater Catechism of the Sacrament of the Altar*, quoted in Wace and Buchheim's edition, p. 144.

[3] See *The Greater Catechism, On Baptism* (Wace and Buchheim, p. 131).

[4] Says Luther: 'With St. Paul, a bishop and a presbyter are the same thing; therefore let a congregation elect and charge a pious and learned citizen as their minister' (*To the German Nobility*, V, 14); Wace and Buchheim, p. 206.

[5] See T. M. Lindsay's *History of the Reformation*, Vol. I, Edinburgh, 1906, pp. 485 ff.

[6] *Institutes*, IV, xvii, 32; cf. W. Walker's *Calvin*, London, 1906, p. 14.

In such phrases, Calvin, like most of the Reformers, often seems to use the term 'real' to denote the physical; and implies that the 'spiritual' is something different from either of these. Moreover, most of the metaphors which the Reformers use to describe the working of the Sacraments (e.g. 'a sealed instrument') are much less likely than the medieval metaphors of a 'channel' or 'substance' to suggest any kind of quasi-material indwelling within the elements.

From this view of grace as 'graciousness' rather than 'substance', there followed a corresponding view of the Divine indwelling in the Christian soul, as a process that cannot rightly be pictured in physical metaphors. The Reformers did indeed agree with the medieval Schoolmen that grace brings about an indwelling of God in the soul, and a union between the soul and God. But while the Schoolmen described this process as a quasi-physical 'infusion', which takes place *ex opere operato*, whenever the sacramental rite is validly performed, the Protestants preferred to speak of it as a 'transaction', in which two *persons* (God and man) are concerned, and which therefore needs the co-operation of faith on the human side. Thus Luther says: 'Faith completes divinity, and, if I may say so, is creative of Divinity in us. . . . Humanity is not Divinity; and yet man is God. . . . They come together in a concrete and composite entity.'[1] Such words remind us of Origen, or of Athanasius.

One might have expected that the Reformers, with their emphasis on personal experience of God, would have found much in common with the medieval mystics. There are indeed some signs of this in Luther's appreciation of Tauler and the *Theologia Germanica*.[2] Calvin, too, at times uses language reminiscent of the mystics; as when he says of the experience of the believer: 'Christ must become ours, and dwell in us.'[3] But as a rule, the Reformers are inclined to regard Mysticism with suspicion, or even contempt. Luther writes of his own contemporary, the mystic Sebastian Frank:

[1] *Works*, XL, 1, p. 360 (Weimar edition).

[2] See J. Mackinnon, *Luther and the Reformation*, Vol. I, London, 1925, pp. 212–20.

[3] *Institutes*, III, i. 1.

> If my nose does not deceive me, he is an enthusiast or spiritualist, who is content with nothing but 'Spirit, Spirit!' and cares not at all for Bible, Sacrament or Preaching![1]

And generally speaking, the mystic way of approach to the conception of Divine indwelling is not acceptable to the Reformers.

*God in Nature, as Immanent Will and Law*

Similarly, when speaking of the Divine indwelling in the world, the Reformers preferred to picture it as immanent Wisdom or Will, rather than after the manner of a Substance. Zwingli, for instance, says:

> God is the life and movement of all things that live and move; yet not only like a kind of material; but such wisdom, knowledge, and providence that nothing is remote from it.[2]

And Calvin, while prepared to accept even the saying that 'Nature is God'—provided that this is 'dictated by a pious mind', does not interpret this in a pantheistic sense, but rather as indicating that 'the world, in all its parts and processes and stages and forms of life, is the outcarrying in time of one Divine plan'.[3]

*The Dualism Inherited by the Reformers from the Middle Ages*

From this thought of an All-Pervading Will, it might seem as though only a short step were needed to pass to the thought of an All-pervading Presence; and in fact, Calvin, in spite of his emphasis on original sin and the total corruption of human nature, did teach that 'the general grace of God' (which he distinguished from the special grace given to the elect) operates everywhere, even among pagans, and in philosophy, art, science, and politics, as well as in revelation and election.[4] Yet just as St. Thomas Aquinas, after similarly positing universal Divine immanence as a theory, proceeded in practice to treat it as of little religious importance, so it is with

[1] Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 196.

[2] S. M. Jackson, *Huldreich Zwingli*, New York, 1903, p. 374; cf. p. 369.

[3] Quoted from W. Hastie's *Theology of the Reformed Church* by J. Orr in Hastings' *E.R.E.*, Vol. III, p. 148b, Art. 'Calvinism.'

[4] E. Choisy in *The Doctrine of Grace*, p. 229.

the Reformers. Calvin's 'general grace' is certainly not 'sufficient for salvation' in the case of any soul outside the predestined number of the elect;[1] and none of the Reformers display that vital interest in the larger world of life outside the ecclesiastical sphere which was characteristic of the Humanists. Rather, they share with the medieval theologians the dualistic outlook which distinguished sharply between the natural and the supernatural, between the truths discovered by reason and those given by revelation. In their case, however, the dividing line did not, as a rule, coincide with the bounds of the organized Church, as it did in Catholic theology.[2]

For although the Reformers did not endorse the Catholic view of the Church, they all inherited from Catholicism the broad division of life into the 'Realm of Grace', in which God operates, and the 'Realm of Darkness' outside. 'The philosophy of Scholasticism was practically taken over bodily by the Reformers from Medievalism.'[3] 'All the Reformers lived in the medieval world. Of modern views on philosophy, history, or politics, there is scarcely a trace in them.'[4] Certainly, if by 'modern views' we mean those which regard the universe in a monistic way, as a single great organism animated by the Divine Spirit, this is true. The Reformers do not stand in the tradition of Christian Immanentism.

Yet the Reformers did play an important, even if indirect, part in the history of the doctrine of Divine indwelling. For though their view of life was still dualistic, and their breach with Catholicism only partial, it was they, with their dynamic enthusiasm, who really broke the power of the ecclesiastical hierarchy to exercise an effective control over the minds of men. It was thanks to them that other thinkers, perhaps more

[1] Cf. Walker's *Calvin*, p. 410. Zwingli, however, believed that non-Christians might be saved (*Works*, IV; quoted by McGiffert in *Protestant Thought*, p. 65).

[2] Luther does indeed approximate to this, when he says: 'He who would know something about Christ must go to the Church . . . For outside the Christian Church, there is no Truth, no Christ, no Salvation.'—*Works*, X, 161, quoted by McGiffert, op. cit., p. 43.

[3] W. R. Matthews, *God in Christian Thought and Experience*, London, 1932, p. 105.

[4] McGiffert, op. cit., p. 98.

penetrating than they along purely intellectual lines, gained both the courage and the opportunity to open up fresh lines of thought, or to re-open some which had been closed for many centuries, without feeling constrained to consider beforehand whether the conclusions towards which their study seemed to point would prove to be within the limits permitted by the Catholic Faith.

The 'left wing' of the Reformation is seen in the advanced Rationalistic Protestants, particularly the Socinians. In them, we find little thought of God as Indweller in the soul; rather, they stressed the moral ability of man to achieve his own salvation without the need for supernatural Divine grace; though they admitted man's need for 'Divine light' to illuminate his reason.[1]

### B. Orthodox Protestantism After the Reformation

*Protestant Scholasticism.* After the fierce controversies and intense spiritual experiences of the sixteenth century, Protestantism settled down into various well-established forms, both on the Continent and in Britain. Fixed rules of faith were provided by the numerous Reformed Confessions, which took the place of the decrees of Œcumenical Councils and the old Canon Law. The Bible to a great extent became what the Mass had been—the chief seat of the Divine indwelling, where men could be sure of finding God in every minute syllable, as they used to find the Whole Christ in every particle of the consecrated Host. The necessity of the supernatural for achieving salvation remained as absolute in Protestant theology as it had been with St. Thomas Aquinas. Thus, Turretin, a French Calvinist, writes in his *Institutio Theologiæ* (1674):

> Although natural revelation gives us various truths concerning God, yet apart from supernatural revelation it does not teach us what can suffice for a *saving* knowledge of God.[2]

Protestant orthodoxy practically assumed that the Divine indwelling was limited to those Christians who had received this supernatural revelation through the Bible; and it did not

[1] McGiffert, op. cit., pp. 109–12.

[2] Quoted by Dr R. S. Franks in *The Modern Churchman*, August, 1932.

generally reach out towards any wider doctrine of Divine indwelling. Here and there, a few devout souls 'found God' by direct spiritual experience; but (as in Catholicism) these had but little influence on current doctrine as a whole. There were also some small groups of independent Protestant thinkers; and among these, one specially merits our attention.

*The Cambridge Platonists.* In the seventeenth century, a group of Anglican clergy, known as 'the Cambridge Platonists', taught a philosophy which implicitly set aside the current Dualism between the natural and supernatural, and affirmed the essential affinity of God with the world in general, and man in particular. One of them, Henry More, adopted Origen's conception of God as 'the Soul of the World';[1] another, John Smith, maintained that 'the spirit and mind of man are god-like, and have a natural capacity for God, even as the eye is fitted by Nature to receive the light of the sun'.[2] Yet another, Benjamin Whichcote, wrote:

> Reverence God in thyself; for God is more in the mind of man than in any part of this world besides. The mind of a good man is the best part of him. . . . Religion is the introduction of the Divine life into the soul of man.[3]

These words remind us of the mystics; but unlike most of the medieval mystics, the Cambridge Platonists did not regard the Divine indwelling as an act wholly apart from the processes of Nature, and replacing the latter, after the soul has been emptied of its natural content; but rather as the completion of that which is the soul's natural destiny, an act in which the whole man—mind and body, as well as spirit—co-operates with God, in a unity which knows no sharp dividing-line between the human and the Divine.

> A good man lives in converse with his own reason; he is raised to intimate converse with the Divinity; he moves in a larger sphere than his own being.[4]

Nor did they separate the Church from the world, or regard the Church as the exclusive trustee of the grace of God:

[1] Inge, *The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought*, p. 56.
[2] Op. cit., p. 59. [3] Op. cit., pp. 48, 51.
[4] John Smith, *The Excellency of True Religion*, quoted by McGiffert, op. cit., p. 376.

> Our Saviour [said Whichcote] accepts of no other separation of His Church from the other part of the world, than that which is made by Truth, Virtue and Holiness of Life.[1]

Thus the Cambridge Platonists represent a thoroughly 'immanentist' type of theology. But their influence upon the thought of their own day was only slight, although they remained loyal members of the Church of England, and stoutly defended the wisdom of her *via media* against what they described as 'the meretricious gaudiness of the Church of Rome' on the one hand, and 'the squalid sluttery of fanatic conventicles' on the other. We seem to hear echoes of similar teaching at times in the poetry of Vaughan and Crashaw, and also in William Law (1686–1761), when he tells us that 'every man must have in him a seed of Christ'.[2] But it was not until the revival of Christian immanentism in the nineteenth century that the Cambridge Platonists were hailed, especially by Dean Inge, as among the greatest of the prophets of their generation.

*The rise of the scientific spirit.* During this period, however, Protestant theology was being slowly but profoundly influenced by a movement which had begun before the Reformation, and came to the forefront in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This was the 'scientific' approach to truth; which, instead of deducing it by logical argument from 'given' doctrines, sought to reach it by careful observation of the phenomena of nature, and by drawing general conclusions from these.

This attitude of mind had been manifest occasionally in the Middle Ages; as when Roger Bacon (1214–94) maintained that:

> The end of philosophy is to arrive at a knowledge of the Creator through knowledge of the created world.[3]

But at that time there were few who cared to take up this implicit challenge to the supreme importance of 'Revealed Truth'; though Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1529), Kepler (1571–1630), and Galileo (1564–1642) may be reckoned among the forerunners of modern science. In England, however, it was not till after the Renaissance that the modern scientific method and

[1] Inge, op. cit., p. 52.

[2] Quoted by Inge in his *Christian Mysticism*, p. 281.

[3] Quoted by Bishop E. W. Barnes in *The Modern Churchman*, August, 1932.

spirit came really to the fore; and its first outstanding exponent was Francis Bacon (1561–1626). He, while not questioning the current distinction between 'natural' and 'revealed' truth, concerned himself wholly with the former, and left the latter for the theologians. In this way he avoided the odium of directly attacking the doctrines of the Church, and at the same time asserted the independent rights of philosophy and science to pursue their investigations in the purely natural realm.

During the next two centuries, English philosophers for the most part moved further and further away from the Church, and began more and more openly to express their disregard for, if not their disbelief in, the orthodox doctrines of Christianity. We can trace this tendency through Hobbes, whose *Leviathan* (1651) sought to explain all the operations of nature on purely mechanistic lines. A few years later, Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) declined to admit any knowledge that is not based upon 'experience' either of the external objects of sense-perception, or of the operations of the mind. Locke himself believed that by this method the existence of an eternal and omnipresent God could be demonstrated.[1] But with David Hume (1711–76) Scepticism became more outspoken, and explicitly denied any Divine intervention in the world's history, or any Divine indwelling in the world's process. Even when he seems to have given a cautious assent to the proposition, 'That the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence', he avers that this 'affords no inference that can affect human life, or be the source of any action'.[2]

Thereafter, Scepticism ran its course in more or less open hostility to the Church; on the continent, through Voltaire and Rousseau, reaching its climax in Haeckel's exultant proclamation of the 'great, eternal, iron laws' of the Universe, that shatter the dogmas of the personality of God, the immortality of the human soul, and the freedom of the will.[3] In England a similar tradition may be traced, not only in philosophy and science,

[1] Essay II, xxvii, 2.

[2] *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, closing para.

[3] Ernst H. Haeckel, *The Riddle of the Universe* (Eng. trans.), Rationalist Press Association, London, 1875, pp. 129 ff.

but also in poetry. One of the most hauntingly beautiful word-pictures of a mechanistic universe that has ever been penned, comes from Edward FitzGerald's translation of *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* (1859):

> The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
> Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
> Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
> Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.
>
> With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man's knead,
> And then of the Last Harvest sow'd the Seed:
> Yea, the first Morning of Creation wrote
> What the last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.[1]

Many of the poems of Algernon L. Swinburne (1837–1909) express a similar view. But even while FitzGerald and Swinburne were congratulating themselves that they had 'bowed God off the stage', and transformed man into a part of the great world-machine, other forces were already at work to bring back the consciousness of God to large parts of the modern world with new power and conviction. These forces, as we shall see in the next chapter, did not originate wholly (perhaps not even mainly) within the Church; but the Church felt their impetus in due time.

*Christian Deism.* Meanwhile, however, the immediate effect of the scientific movement of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries upon the Church was to drive back the sense of the presence of God from everyday experience into more and more remote realms. The existence of God was not denied; but it was regarded as unworthy of an intelligent man to profess any direct knowledge of Him, or any personal experience of Him. Thus we find divines such as John Toland and Matthew Tindal presenting a theology in which the transcendence of the Deity is allowed practically to exclude all idea of immanence.[2] God is an all-wise, all-good Being up in heaven, who made the world once upon a time, appointed good and reasonable laws for its governance (as a watch-maker provides his watches with reliable works) and does not now interfere with their operation. Christ

[1] Stanzas 51 and 53.

[2] See, e.g., Toland's *Christianity Not Mysterious*, 1696, or Tindal's *Christianity as Old as Creation*, 1730.

came to republish these laws, which men were inclined to forget; and in particular, to emphasize the law of rewards and punishments for individual souls on a moral basis after death, as affording the main incentive for Christian living. Rarely has the Gospel been presented in a form which gives less encouragement to the idea of Divine indwelling in any form.

In one direction, however, the Deists did indirectly prepare the way for the subsequent revival of Immanentism. By denying any 'irruption' of the supernatural into the realm of Nature, they left the latter, as it were, standing by itself as a unity; and when, later on, Nature came to be regarded as filled with God, the resultant conception of Divine immanence was wider and freer from limitations than any which had been possible under the dualisms of current orthodoxy. This, however, was a result not contemplated or purposed by the Deists themselves.

Deism, though prevalent in high places in the Church, did not pass unchallenged; but its opponents did not approach any nearer towards Immanentism. The most famous attack upon Deism is found in Bishop Butler's *Analogy* (1736). But the *Analogy* agrees with the Deists in accepting the essential separation between the natural and the supernatural; it differs from them only in maintaining that at certain specified points in history the supernatural has broken through into the realm of Nature in the form of miracle; so that in addition to the knowledge which we can obtain by Nature, there are special 'revealed truths' given to us by Christ, which are particular in their scope and application.[1] There is nothing in the *Analogy* to suggest that God normally dwells within Nature; and even the doctrine of the Indwelling Spirit in the Christian soul seems to be regarded as an exceptional gift, intended only for saints of unusual piety.

Indeed, the doctrine of the Indwelling Spirit came to be regarded by the orthodox (both High Church and Protestant)

[1] See, e.g., W. E. Gladstone's edition of the *Analogy*, Oxford, 1897, Parts I and II, and especially Part II, iv.

Even in the present day, some of the most popular books of Apologetics follow substantially the argument of the *Analogy*, and base their defence of the faith mainly upon 'miraculous revelation', and the evidence from prophecy; e.g., W. H. Turton's *The Truth of Christianity*, 1st ed., London, 1895, and still re-appearing in fresh editions almost annually; see, eg., pp. 113, 218, etc.

with peculiar detestation towards the close of the eighteenth century. Books such as G. F. Nott's *Religious Enthusiasm* (1802) were directed especially against the idea that ordinary Christians might be illuminated by the Divine Spirit. Early in the nineteenth century a group of young 'methodist' students were actually expelled from the University of Oxford on the charge of dangerous religious tendencies, one of which was that 'they talked of regeneration, inspiration, and drawing nigh to God'.[1] So far had Protestant orthodoxy travelled away from the religion of the New Testament.

[1] See G. R. Balleine's *History of the Evangelical Party*, London, 1908, p. 124.

# CHAPTER XI

## THE MODERN REVIVAL OF IMMANENTISM IN THE WESTERN WORLD

### A. Forerunners of the Revival

*The Persistence of Immanentism in the Christian Tradition*

The preceding chapters have shown that the conception of Divine indwelling has for the most part occupied only a subordinate place in the 'norm' of Christian Doctrine, whether Catholic, Orthodox, or Reformed. On the other hand, it has rarely been entirely suppressed; and in almost every age, there have been some Christian thinkers for whom it has appeared to be a primary truth of Religion, and who conceived of it on a scale wider than that which was commonly authorized by the teachers of the Church.

*The Early Pioneers of the Renaissance*

We have already referred to the School of Alexandria in the third century,[1] and to Scotus Erigena and Abelard in the ninth and twelfth centuries respectively,[2] as 'prophets' of the wider immanence, and of the essential organic unity of God and the world.

In the same succession of thought, a little later on, stands Petrarch (A.D. 1304–74), 'the founder of Humanism, and the inaugurator of the Renaissance',[3] who taught that all human culture and literature should be regarded as a real revelation of Divine truth.

A century later, we find a prince of the Church, Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa (d. A.D. 1464) setting forth a philosophy of the Divine indwelling which transcends all ecclesiastical limitations:

[1] See above, pp. 136 ff. [2] See above, p. 153.

[3] J. A. Symonds, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14th ed., Vol. XVII, Art. 'Petrarch'.

Thine Essence, O God, Thy Sight, pervadeth all things.
Thy Spirit cannot be lacking unto any spirit, because It is the Spirit of spirits.
God unfoldeth all things out of Himself.[1]

Such language, though not technically heretical, sprang from a philosophy far removed from that of medieval scholasticism, and opened the way for more daring flights of thought in the near future. Another kindred spirit was Paracelsus (d. A.D. 1541), who has been called 'the first modern scientist', and who maintained that the life of man is inseparable from that of the rest of the Universe.[2]

All those thinkers, however, were but 'voices crying in the wilderness' in those days; and unless they expressed themselves with circumspection, they were always liable to incur the censure of the Church. But eventually the ideas which they fostered gained strength and won open recognition in the Renaissance, which marks one of the great transition-points in the history of the western world.

*The Renaissance Thinkers of the Sixteenth Century*

The thought and spirit of the Renaissance is essentially modern, rather than medieval, or even reformed. For its outstanding features were its independence of the Church, and its interest in the hitherto largely-forgotten stores of learning to be found outside the Catholic tradition, in Greek and Arabian philosophy; and also in its optimistic estimate of life as a whole, and man in particular, which refused to limit God, or goodness, to the ecclesiastical sphere alone. Hence the approach of the Renaissance to the idea of Divine indwelling was widely different from that of the Schoolmen. The Schoolmen had deduced it from the *a priori* doctrine of God's perfection; but the thinkers of the Renaissance (though not without their own philosophic pre-suppositions) believed that all knowledge must be based upon scientific observation or philosophic reflection, and not solely upon a process of logical deduction from 'given'

[1] From E. G. Salter, *The Vision of God* (a translation of Nicholas of Cusa), London, 1928; see Chaps. ix, xii, xx, xxv.

[2] See the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14th edition, Vol. XX, Art. 'Paracelsus.'

dogmas. In so far as they used the method of deduction, they were more inclined to start from the assumptions of Neo-Platonic philosophy than from the dogmas of the Catholic Church; and as Humanists, they were more disposed to emphasize the greatness of Man than the greatness of God. So their approach to the idea of Divine immanence was mainly from the human side; and instead of the argument of the Schoolmen: '*God* is so great, that nothing can be outside Him!' they preferred to say: '*Man* is so great, that surely he must be Divine!' This did indeed lead them to a conception of the Divine indwelling in man; but one very different from that which the Church had authorized in the past.

*Giordano Bruno, and his Successors*

Perhaps the real significance of the Renaissance theories may be best seen in one of their ablest and most 'extreme' exponents, Giordano Bruno (1548–1600). Bruno, whom his Scottish biographer has called 'the greatest and most daring thinker that Italy has ever produced',[1] was by temperament a rebel, and refused to confine the expression of his thought within the limits prescribed by the Church; so that he was finally burnt at the stake as a heretic. He spent many years in close contact with Protestantism in Germany, England and Switzerland, and he agreed with the Reformers in rejecting the Aristotelian philosophy adopted by the Church.[2] But instead of drawing fresh inspiration from the Bible, as the Reformers did, he turned mainly to the Neo-Platonist and Arabian philosophies, which were then being revived in Europe by the 'New Learning'.

Bruno's earlier writings seem to hover between a philosophic Transcendentalism which postulates God as the Unchangeable Absolute, and an extreme Immanentism (if not Pantheism) which identifies God with the Universe as 'One Soul, One Spirit of the world, wholly in the whole and in every part of it'.[3] But in his maturer thought, he came to recognize different grades of immanence: 'God is in all things, but not fully expressed in each; in some more, in others less excellently.'[4]

[1] J. L. McIntyre, *Giordano Bruno*, London, 1903, p. vii.
[2] Op. cit., p. 199. [3] Op. cit., p. 199. [4] Op. cit., p. 306.

In such words we seem to catch an echo of Origen's teaching that the whole Universe is 'the Body of God'[1]—a conception which for many centuries had found no clear expression in Christendom.

Even more far-reaching was Bruno's decisive rejection of the Church's claim to be the exclusive possessor and dispenser of the Divine presence. He turns away from the Church to the 'laws' of Nature, and finds in them 'the best signs of Divinity'; and he views the whole history of the world as a process of Divine unfolding from within, rather than as the result of a single act of creation in the past, by the *fiat* of an external Deity.[2]

Essentially 'modernist', too, was Bruno's contention that all existing systems of religion (including Christianity) are only relatively true—'allegories or metaphors of the Truth'.[3] This implied the rejection of the Church's claim to finality in dogma and revelation; and it is not surprising that it was punished with the supreme penalty imposed by the Inquisition.

Other thinkers of the Renaissance, whose real views largely agreed with Bruno's, escaped the stake by professing their adherence to the Catholic Faith, alongside their philosophic speculations. Among these was Campanella (1568–1639), who held that God is immanent in varying degrees in all creatures, both animate and inanimate.[4] Campanella was also a typical Humanist in his approach to life's problems: 'Man' (he said) 'knows in the proper sense only himself; and knows all else only from and through himself.'[5] But side by side with this, he accepted all the 'revealed theology' of the Church; and so he was left to die in peace.

The supreme importance of the Renaissance in the history of western thought lay in this—that it (together with the Reformation) broke the firm hold which the medieval Church had maintained over human thought and speculation in Europe.

[1] See above, p. 163.

[2] McIntyre, op. cit., p. 137.

[3] Op. cit., p. 30.

[4] *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14th edition, Vol. IV, p. 673, Art. 'Campanella'.

[5] W. Windelband, *History of Philosophy*, English translation by J. H. Tufts, New York, 1910, p. 370.

It opened before men a vision of unexplored realms, and gave them new courage to go forward and investigate, without feeling that the conclusions to be reached were prescribed for them beforehand. It was only gradually that men began to follow up the new lines of thought suggested; but in the centuries which followed the Renaissance, both science and philosophy tended more and more to assert their independence of the Church. So it was in the field of philosophy, rather than of Church dogma, that the idea of Divine indwelling was retained and developed during the period which intervened between the Renaissance of the sixteenth century and the widespread revival of Immanentism in the nineteenth century; and it is to the story of philosophy that we must now turn.

### *Philosophic Immanentism in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*

The field of study under this heading is immense, and we can only endeavour to select a few salient points for notice.

*Pantheistic tendencies.* Many of the philosophers of this period showed a disposition to question whether there is any ultimate distinction between Mind and Matter, and to maintain that 'God' (if this term is to be allowed at all) must be regarded as equivalent to the sum-total of all the phenomena of the world. Sometimes thinkers of this type preferred to express everything in terms of matter, and sometimes in terms of spirit; but in either case, by practically equating 'God' and 'the world', they rendered any idea of real Divine indwelling in the world superfluous.

Pre-eminent among the exponents of this kind of Pantheism stands *Benedict de Spinoza* (1632–77). 'Besides God' (he writes) 'no substance can be granted or conceived.' 'Whatsoever is, is God, and without God nothing can be conceived;' because 'God is the indwelling, not the "transient" (i.e., external) cause of all things.'[1] But when Spinoza speaks of 'God', he does not mean a personal Being with will or emotions of any kind, but an underlying Reality which indwells or inheres equally in all

[1] Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part I, Props. xiv, xv, xvii (R. Elwes' translation, London, 1891). More recent English translations of Spinoza are by W. Hale White, Oxford, 1920, and A. Boyle in 'Everyman's Library', London.

things, good and bad, ordinary and extraordinary.[1] In this conception, immanence has become practically merged in identity, and has thereby lost its distinctive meaning.

In the eighteenth century, a shallower and less guarded type of Pantheism is expressed by the poet Alexander Pope, who, himself a member of the Roman Catholic Church, writes of God in pleasant popular rhymes as 'the All in All', without much apparent realization of the issues involved, particularly in the moral sphere.

> All are but parts of one stupendous Whole,
> Whose body Nature is, and God the Soul;
> That . . .
> Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
> As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
> As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
> As the rapt seraph that adores and burns:
> To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
> He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.
> . . . . . .
> All discord, harmony not understood;
> All partial evil, universal good;
> And, spite of pride, in erring's reason spite,
> One truth is clear: Whatever is, is Right.[2]

The very *naïveté* of this apotheosis of 'things as they are' is not without its value; for it exposes the danger which, though less overt in the language of more guarded teachers, is always latent in the tendency towards Pantheism.

*The rise of Idealism.* Of greater importance for our subject than either Materialism or Pantheism was the growth of the Idealistic School of philosophy during this period. 'Idealism' is a term hard to define, and capable of many shades of meaning. Generally speaking, it stands for the belief that behind the phenomena of the world there is an Unseen Reality, which manifests itself through them, but always remains more than

[1] *Ethics*, Part I, Prop. i, Coroll. 2; and Part V, Prop. xvii, etc. Spinoza himself considered that his own conception of Immanence was entirely alien from the Christian conception of Incarnation. 'As for the proposition that God took on Him the nature of a man, it seems to me as if one should tell me that a triangle had assumed the nature of a square' (Epistle 73).

[2] *Essay on Man*, Bk. I, ll. 267–8, 275–280, 291–294.

them. This 'something more' is often conceived of as a transcendent God, manifesting Himself through, and in some sense immanent in, the material world. So Idealism is generally closely associated with Immanentism; and indeed it was the revival of Idealism in the eighteenth century which 'once more brought into prominence the thought of Divine immanence'.[1]

In many ways, the philosophy of Bishop Berkeley (1685–1753) is closely akin to Idealism. For Berkeley maintains that *esse est percipi*, in other words, that so-called 'material' things exist only as objects perceived by mind or spirit, and that matter has no independent existence of its own. The only primary Reality is the infinite Spirit of God, in whose mind all things exist, and may continue to exist even when no finite mind is perceiving them.[2] Berkeley has sometimes been called a pantheist;[3] but the essence of his philosophy seems to be rather theistic or idealistic; for he regards the phenomena of Nature as the 'language' or the 'body' through which the Mind of God may be seen and heard by us.[4]

With Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) the characteristic notes of Idealism become clearer. In his early days, his conception of God was predominantly transcendentalist, and the idea of Divine indwelling receives but little explicit consideration.[5] But in his later writings, he advocates the conception of God 'not as the substance of a separate personality outside me, but as the thought of a personality within me'.[6] C. C. J. Webb, commenting on this passage, says that towards the end of his life, Kant, while 'as little disposed as ever to a merely naturalistic Immanentism, was prepared to repudiate more openly the Deism which had been so predominant in his youth—a Deism which taught a merely transcendent God'.[7]

In his attitude to Christian doctrine, Kant favours a wider

[1] V. F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology, 1800–1860*, London, 1913, p. 152.

[2] Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge*, 1710, §§ 3, 6, 18-20, 40 ff.

[3] So T. H. Green, *Works*, ed. Nettleship, Vol. I, p. 155.

[4] Berkeley, op. cit., p. 148.

[5] See Webb, *Kant's Philosophy of Religion*, Oxford, 1926, p. 50; or R. Adamson in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 13th ed., Art. 'Kantian Philosophy'.

[6] Webb, op. cit., p. 198. [7] Webb, pp. 199 ff.

interpretation of Divine immanence than the Church generally authorized. We begin to catch in his teaching the note of 'Relativism', which came to be so closely associated with the wider immanentism in the succeeding century. For instance, he uses the term 'Christ' for the ideal of the perfect man, and 'The Church' to denote the ideal of the perfect human community; thus associating these terms with a wider conception than that of the single historic person of Jesus, or the historic Church.

In this Relativism, Kant was followed by his contemporaries, Lessing (d. 1781) and Herder (d. 1803), who taught that God indwells the whole process of history, and might even be viewed as 'a God emerging in the course of human events'. This 'emergence of God' was not limited by them to the Christian Religion; for they held that in all the faiths of humanity, God might be seen at work in some measure, and at the same time, that in none of them (not even in Christianity) can we find absolute perfection and finality.[1]

Other philosophers of the Idealistic School, such as I. G. Fichte (1762–1814), Schelling (1775–1854), Schopenhauer (1788–1860) and especially Hegel (1770–1831), were even more explicit in affirming the Divine indwelling throughout all the processes of the world. They spoke of 'the imbedded Reason in the Universe'; of 'God expressing Himself in Nature and History'; of 'the Absolute flowing through the life of the individual'; and so forth.[2] Such phrases suggest a Divine operation extending through and 'indwelling' all time and all the ranges of life, binding them all into an 'organic unity', higher than, but analagous to, the unity which we see in the human body which is indwelt by a single spirit.[3]

Schleiermacher (1768–1834), often called 'the father of modern theology', has many points of affinity with the Idealists, though his system has been described as 'a theistic Pantheism'. He taught that God is neither wholly separated from, nor wholly identical with, this world, and is the central unity on

[1] Cf. Storr, op. cit., pp. 161 ff.

[2] Storr, pp. 45–150.

[3] See E. Caird, *Hegel*, Edinburgh, 1883, p. 181.

which all things depend. He, too, claims to write as a Christian philosopher.[1]

The post-Kantian Idealists were thus definitely 'immanentist' in their philosophy. Can they also be reckoned as definitely Christian? They certainly did not, for the most part, repudiate the Christian name, or make any direct attack upon Christian doctrines. But, following Kant, they interpreted these in a broader sense than that commonly adopted by the Church. Hegel, for instance, freely uses the terms of Christian orthodoxy, and speaks of Christianity as 'the Absolute Religion', because it is 'the Religion of the Incarnation', and 'Incarnation is essential to God'.[2] By 'the Incarnation', however, he means, not a single, once-for-all event in Jesus Christ, but a process that is continually operative in the Universe, and is seen at its highest in the history of mankind at large, in whom God incarnates Himself. Within this process, the Incarnation in Jesus is (for Hegel and Fichte) 'a supreme illustration of the eternal truth of the unity of human and divine'.[3] In its extreme form, this view tends to identify God with the processes of Creation and History, and makes Him 'achieve His Personality' only through these processes.[4]

Between orthodox Christianity and these views of the German Idealists there is a wide gulf. Nevertheless, the influence of the latter spread rapidly to other countries, such as England where its results are seen in the British school of Idealists,[5] and indeed in the general development of theology in the English Church. For although few theologians in the orthodox tradition were prepared wholly to endorse the all-embracing view of Divine immanence advocated by the German Idealists, the principles which the latter had adopted—and particularly, the ideas of historical continuity, of the unity of all life, and the relativity of human knowledge—began to spread, silently but steadily, within the Church, and affected current Church teaching in a very fundamental way. One result was, that, for many

[1] See W. B. Selbie's *Schleiermacher*, London, 1913.
[2] Storr, op. cit., p. 213.
[3] Storr, p. 210.
[4] See Inge, *God and the Astronomers*, London, 1933, p. 232.
[5] See below, p. 194 f.

Christians, God was rescued from the remote heaven to which Deism had banished Him, and was brought back into close touch with human life, as the Indwelling Power and Purpose to be seen in history.

The further thought of God as 'immanent substance' within Nature followed a little later; largely through the influence of two fresh movements of thought in the early nineteenth century, one from the realm of Art, and one from the realm of Science, which we shall shortly consider.

The persistent influence of the Mystic Tradition, both in Religion and Philosophy, also contributed to the same end. For although both the world and the Church were so largely under the spell of Materialism and Deism during these centuries, the tradition of the mystic was not wholly lost, either in Catholicism or in Protestantism. Miguel de Molinos (1644–97);[1] M. Böhme (1575–1624), who spoke of 'the Indwelling Christ in man' and 'the Indwelling of God in Nature'; M. Fénelon (1651–1715), the leader of the Quietists in France, who said, 'I see God in everything'; and in England, the Cambridge Platonists, the poets Crashaw and Vaughan, and William Law[2] —all these witnessed to the reality of the indwelling God, in an age which largely ignored Him; and they may be reckoned among those who prepared the way for the revival of Immanentism in the nineteenth century. Even Rousseau, in many respects a Rationalist, says: 'I converse with God; I permeate all my faculties with His Divine Essence.'[3]

## B. The Chief Factors in the Revival of Immanentism in the Early Nineteenth Century

### *The Romantic Movement and its Poets*

The inadequacy of Rationalism or Deism to satisfy humanity led to reactions of various kinds, both within and without the Church. One such reaction (not primarily theological or ecclesiastical, but indirectly of much significance for religion)

[1] Author of *The Spiritual Guide.*

[2] Brief accounts of all these will be found in Inge's *Christian Mysticism.*

[3] *Émile*; quoted by McGiffert in *Protestant Thought before Kant*, p. 246.

was the Romantic Movement, associated in England with such names as Sir Walter Scott, Coleridge, and Wordsworth, and on the Continent with Goethe and his followers. It is a movement elusive and difficult to characterize; but it stressed the sense of mystery in life, and the kinship of man with Nature and with the 'something more' that lies behind both Nature and History. It was also associated with what Otto has called the 'numinous' type of religious experience. For Goethe, this constituted practically the whole of his religion: 'Nature was to him God, and God Nature; . . . and his Nature-contemplation was touched to joyous strength by optimism.'[1] But the English 'Romantic' poets of the nineteenth century had a stronger sense of God as a person behind impersonal Nature; and they have given us some of the most famous and beautiful expressions of the sense of universal Divine immanence that have ever been written. This marks a new line of thought in English poetry. The earlier English poets, up to the end of the eighteenth century, had been for the most part predominantly 'transcendentalist' in their thought of God. To Shakespeare and Milton, God is the All-Sovereign in heaven; and if He dwells with man, this is (as in the Old Testament) a singular act of Divine graciousness. Spenser indeed had hailed God as 'That Sovereign Light . . . from whose pure beams All perfect beauty springs'; but even this conception is scarcely immanentist. And most of the earlier English poets view the earth as (in Henry Vaughan's phrase) 'God's footstool, and man's dwelling-place', rather than as the dwelling-place of God. But with the opening of the nineteenth century, we find a succession of English poets proclaiming: 'We have felt God within Nature!'

Shelley (1792–1822) is so full of the atmosphere of mystery that he is close akin to the Romantic poets; yet he hardly belongs to this group, in spite of his wonderful feeling for beauty in Nature; for he seems to regard Nature as *veiling* the Divine glory, rather than as revealing it or enshrining it. To him, only the One is real; all the rest is illusion—*maya*, as the Indian thinkers had said:

[1] J. Lindsay in Hastings' *E.R.E.*, Vol. VII, p. 307, Art. 'Goethe'.

The One remains, the Many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity. . . .[1]

With S. T. Coleridge (1772–1834), the sense of Divine indwelling in all the world becomes stronger, and even central. Indeed, both as philosopher and poet, he stands out as one of the most striking exponents of Immanentism in the English language. In his *Destiny of Nations* the thought of God as the Soul of the world is the key-note of the whole scheme:

Glory to Thee, Father of Earth and Heaven!
All-conscious Presence of the Universe!
Nature's vast ever-acting Energy!
In will, in deed, Impulse of All to All!
. . . . . .
That as one body seems the aggregate
Of atoms numberless, each organized;
So by a strange and dim similitude
Infinite myriads of self-conscious minds
Are one all-conscious Spirit, which informs
With absolute ubiquity of thought . . .
All his involvéd Monads, that yet seem
With various province and apt agency
Each to pursue his own self-centering end. . . .
Duteous or proud, alike obedient all,
Evolve the process of eternal Good.

Or again:

And what if all of animated Nature
Be but organic harps diversely formed
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each, and God of all?

In William Wordsworth (1770–1850) a similar conception finds expression:

Spirit knows no insulated spot;
No chasm, no solitude; from link to link
It circulates, the Soul of all the world.[2]

Or again:

. . . . . I have felt
A Presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime

[1] *Adonais*, ll. 460–3. [2] *The Excursion.*

> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a Spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.[1]

In these words we have a classic expression of the faith of the Immanentist, by a soul sincerely and devoutly Christian.

The Immanentism of the Coleridge-Wordsworth tradition was carried on through several writers of the later Victorian era.

In Alfred Tennyson (1809–92), the influences of Romanticism, and of the Evolutionary Theory of Darwin, blended to produce what Tennyson called 'The Higher Pantheism', but what might more truly be styled 'The Higher Immanentism':

> The Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the Seas, the Hills and the Plains—
> Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?
>
> Is not the Vision He? tho' He be not that which He seems?
> Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with spirit can meet—
> Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.
>
> God is Law, say the wise; O soul, and let us rejoice,
> For if He thunder by Law, the thunder is yet His voice!
>
> Law is God, say some: no God at all, says the fool;
> For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool;
>
> And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;
> But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?

Tennyson views the universe as an organic whole, so closely bound together that if we could find out all about even the tiny 'Flower in the crannied wall', we should find this to be intertwined with all the mysteries of the whole universe.

This idea of the essential oneness of God and man—the humanity of God and the divinity of man—as a great truth revealed in Christ, is taken up again by Robert Browning (1812–89). Thus in *Saul*:

[1] *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*, ll. 93–102.

'Tis . . . my flesh that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. . . .
. . . See the Christ stand!

Browning, more explicitly than his predecessors, also applies the principle of evolution to man, picturing man as standing at present at the head of the evolutionary process, and destined to achieve still greater heights in the future, as he ascends ever nearer to God:

. . . . . all tended to mankind,
And, man produced, all has its end, thus far;
But in completed man begins anew
A tendency to God.[1]

Even A. H. Clough (1819–61), with all his doubts and fears, sees behind the ebb and flow of life's currents a prevailing tide which underflows and pervades them all; so that

While the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

In America, Whittier (1807–92) and Emerson (1803–82) express a similar outlook. Whittier pictures God as the 'Immortal Love, for ever full, for ever flowing free' through all life; and his questioning, yet reverent attitude to Christian doctrine recognizes it as 'half concealing and revealing' the reality which indwells it and yet transcends it. Emerson goes further in the direction of Pantheism, telling us that 'Within man is the Soul of the Whole, to which every part and particle is equally related —the Eternal One';[2] and he pictures the Supreme as an impersonal, omnipresent power, that blesses and blends with all life:

This is Jove, who, deaf to prayers,
Floods with blessings unawares.
Draw, if thou canst, the mystic line
Severing rightly His from thine,
Which is human, which divine.[3]

All these express an instinct and a feeling which were very potent and very widespread in the nineteenth century.

[1] *Paracelsus.*
[2] Quoted in Inge's *Christian Mysticism*, 1912 ed., p. 321.
[3] 'Worship', ll. 19–23.

Nor did it end with the nineteenth century, though it is more characteristic of that age than of the present. In one of the greatest poems of our own century, Robert Bridges has traced 'the domination of Nature's secret urge' through all history and nature, and has found therein a testament of beauty to the Divine Creator and Indweller.[1]

*The Scientific Movement and the Theory of Evolution*

We have seen how the revival of the immanentist idea through poetry began, quite early in the nineteenth century, with a spontaneous outburst of feeling and emotion, rather than as a result of reasoned reflection. But soon the 'Romantic' consciousness of the Indweller in Nature was influenced and strengthened by a widespread change of intellectual outlook, due particularly to the spread of the Theory of Evolution.

The idea of evolution was indeed not a new one. In the previous century, philosophers such as Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, Lessing and Herder had begun to apply it to the process of human history. Now it was extended to the realm of Nature at large. The beginnings of this may be seen as far back as 1830, when Lyell, in his *Principles of Geology*, pictured the history of life on the earth as a panorama of gradual development extending over long ages. Lyell was content to state facts, without drawing theological conclusions therefrom; but the implications for theology were bound to be seen in course of time.

A few years later, Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859), and his *Descent of Man* (1871), still more obviously contained an implicit challenge to current ideas of Creation. Darwin himself doubtless realized this; though he neither pressed the point, nor claimed that his theory had any fresh religious value of its own. By many of the orthodox, he was regarded as the arch-enemy of religion. To other minds, however, the conception of a vast process of evolution ranging over all life and all history, appeared to suggest the operation of some supreme mind, or at least some immanent source, unfolding itself and expressing itself through these manifold forms. This feeling was expressed not only by those whose primary interest was in religion, but

[1] *The Testament of Beauty*, Oxford, 1929, Book I, l. 44.

also among scientists, some of whom gave a religious background to their scientific theories. Thus A. R. Wallace (another pioneer in the study of evolution), proclaims his faith in an immanent Deity behind the evolutionary process:

> God of the granite and the rose!
> Soul of the sparrow and the bee!
> The mighty Tide of Being rolls
> Through countless channels, Lord, from Thee![1]

Probably Wallace was in this respect in the minority among scientists of his day. Most of them declined to commit themselves to any kind of religious faith; and many of them maintained, with Huxley, that evolution is 'morally neutral', giving us no evidence that its course is directed towards any intelligible goal, or animated by any benevolent mind. Yet in spite of this, the idea of evolution continued more and more to permeate not only theological circles, but also the religion of ordinary folk in England, and it was an important factor in promoting the revival of Immanentism within the Church in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The titles of such books as Henry Drummond's *Ascent of Man* (1894), Griffith's *The Ascent Through Christ*, or E. Caird's *Evolution of Theology*, indicate the trend of thought in this respect.

*Philosophic Tendencies*

Side by side with the Romantic and Scientific movements of the nineteenth century were certain developments of philosophic thought which also turned men's minds towards the idea of Divine indwelling. Philosophy itself was not uninfluenced by the poets, such as S. T. Coleridge; and the Immanentism of Goethe was being passed on to English readers through the writings of Thomas Carlyle.[2]

*The British Idealists.* In the second half of the century, the Idealism which had taken its rise on the Continent was transmitted to the British universities, largely through a group of teachers who, though primarily philosophers rather than theologians, were by no means hostile to the Church, and indeed

[1] *The World of Life.* [2] Carlyle translated Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* in 1824.

believed that their views were an expression of true Christianity. These are generally known as the British Idealists; and of them T. H. Green (1836–82), and the two Cairds—(John, 1820–98, and Edward, 1835–1908)—were among the most eminent. They brought before the English-speaking public the principles of the great German Idealists, particularly Hegel; but they presented these with a Christian enthusiasm greater than their Continental forerunners had known.

Two great principles of the British Idealists were: (*a*) that all life is a unity, without any hard-and-fast division between natural and supernatural, miraculous and non-miraculous; and (*b*) that the world as we know it is a partial, but real, expression of the Ideal that lies behind it. Hence, on the one hand, they reject the claim of 'ordinary supernaturalism' to find at certain points in history the appearance of miracles or infallible utterances in the Bible or Church, different in kind from the rest of life; and on the other hand, they no less emphatically affirm that at all points, 'things as they are' partly reveal and partly conceal the Great Reality that lies behind. In other words, they find throughout all the phenomena of life (and especially in man), signs of the Indwelling God.

Typical sayings of the British Idealists are such as these:

> God is identical with the 'self' of every man, in the sense of being the realization of its determinate possibilities.[1]
>
> The world is as necessary to God as God is to the world.[2]
>
> The belief in the revelation of God in man is the rock on which the Christian Church is really founded.[3]
>
> Nature, the finite mind, and God are ideas which belong to one organic whole or system of knowledge.[4]

Their attitude towards the dogmas of the Church was, that these might be regarded as an 'ossification' of ideas which are eternally true in the realm of philosophy. Thus, it is a universal truth that God realizes Himself through self-sacrifice. Now in Christian doctrine, this true idea has become specially 'attached' to Jesus Christ, and is expressed in the doctrines of His

[1] T. H. Green, *Works*, ed. Nettleship, Vol. III, p. 227.
[2] T. H. Green, quoted in H. Rashdall's *God and Man*, Oxford, 1930, p. 43.
[3] E. Caird, *The Evolution of Religion*, Vol. II, 1893, p. 320.
[4] J. Caird, *The Philosophy of Religion*, 1920 ed., p. 221.

Atonement and Resurrection; but we need not claim that this truth is realized only in Christ, nor that in Him its realization was final or complete; we only affirm that in Him we can see with exceptional clearness a great truth that belongs to life as a whole. Thus the British Idealists paved the way for a 'relativist' conception of the Divine indwelling, which sees God in some measure everywhere, but in perfection in no earthly thing.

Many of the later philosophers of the Idealistic School in England moved further away from orthodox Christianity. Bradley and Bosanquet, for instance, question whether the Supreme Reality can properly be called personal, and whether man is capable of personal immortality.[1]

*The Vitalism of Bergson, etc.*

The reaction against Materialism manifests itself along several lines in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and the early years of the twentieth. Of these, one of the most notable is the 'Vitalism' of Bergson (born 1859), whose *Évolution Créatrice* (1907),[2] opened up new lines of thought for many. But Bergson's theories do not really harmonize with the idea of Divine indwelling; for although his 'procreant urge' (*élan vital*) at the heart of things is 'in them, not outside,[3] it is a finite Life-force, so completely free and undetermined that we cannot think of it as guided by mind or purpose towards any intelligible end; and therefore it is not the indwelling of God, in any theistic sense. 'God and Life are one. But this God is finite, not omnipotent, is limited by matter, is not omniscient, but groping gradually towards more light.'[4]

In Benedetto Croce, again, although the titles of some of his books, for example *The Philosophy of the Spirit* (1905), might lead us to expect some exposition of the idea of Divine indwelling, these expectations are not fulfilled; and his *Aesthetic* (1902) leaves God largely out of account.[5]

[1] Webb, *Religious Thought in England*, Oxford, 1933, pp. 48, 115 ff.

[2] Eng. trans. by A. Mitchell, *Creative Evolution*, London, 1920.

[3] Op. cit., p. 89.

[4] Op. cit., p. 248.

[5] See, e.g., the chapter on Croce in W. Durant's *Story of Philosophy*, New York, 1926, pp. 507–17.

The same may be said of many of the more recent theories which reject Materialism, but decline to accept Theism: the 'Emergent Evolution' of Whitehead, the 'Holism' of General Smuts, the 'Vitalism' of Julian Huxley or C. E. M. Joad. None of these show much disposition to approach a Christian type of Immanentism, or to find at the heart of things something that is not only living, but loving too. Nevertheless, in so far as they present us with the picture of a world that is throughout alive and active, they have more in common with Immanentism than with Materialism or with any kind of religion in which the transcendence of God has been so emphasized as to leave the world as a thing apart from God.

# CHAPTER XII

## THE REVIVAL OF IMMANENTISM WITHIN THE ENGLISH CHURCH IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

### A. The Chief 'Schools of Thought' in the Church

In the previous chapter we traced certain movements of thought in Europe, from the Renaissance to the present day, which favoured the revival of a fuller recognition of the Divine presence in the world. In the present chapter we shall confine our attention mainly to the further development of this tendency in England, and particularly in the Church of England. In the early part of the nineteenth century, English theology prided itself on its insularity; and indeed at no time in recent years have the leaders of the English Church been readily accessible to ideas coming from the Continent.

Nevertheless, some of the distinctive teachings of Continental teachers, especially from Germany, gradually began to penetrate into ecclesiastical circles in England; and the ideas of Hegel, Schleiermacher and Goethe became widespread, even where there was little first-hand acquaintance with their writings. It is true that the most notable movements within the Church in the early nineteenth century—the Evangelical Revival, and (to a large extent) the Tractarian Movement—were not consciously dependent for their theology upon any source outside the Anglican tradition. But even these movements could not escape all contact with the 'spirit of the times'; and the third great tradition in the Church—the Liberal—has always been deliberately receptive towards new thought. The tendency towards 'Immanentism' comes to the surface of English Christianity in the latter half of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth; at first mainly in the teaching of individuals and groups of friends, but later on also in some of the official pronouncements by Church leaders and Church assemblies.

We may first note the chief developments of theology in

the three great schools of thought in the English Church during the nineteenth century, and then study the main characteristics of the 'Gospel of Immanence' that emerged to some extent in all of these schools, towards the close of the century.

*The Evangelical Movement*

The Methodist and Evangelical Revival, which began with the Wesleys in the eighteenth century, and extended with dynamic force into the nineteenth, was, like the Romantic Movement, partly a protest against the cold Rationalism and Deism of the preceding ages; but the two movements sprang up, and for the most part ran their courses independently of each other.

The early Evangelical preachers produced an intense conviction of the reality of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the 'converted'. This was indeed one of their chief errors in the eyes of the orthodox, whether Protestants or High Churchmen, who considered it intolerable that any ordinary Christian should claim to be indwelt by the Spirit of God.[1] But the Evangelicals maintained that in this matter the New Testament type of Christianity ought to be normal for Christians in all ages; and that 'if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His'. As a rule, they also insisted that this experience must be a conscious one; the converted man or woman must be aware of the gift of the Spirit, and must be able to express this in the accepted terms of Evangelical theology.

Along this line of personal experience, the Evangelicals brought back into the Church the consciousness (which had been almost lost for a long period) of the indwelling of God in the Christian soul. But they do not seem to have been interested in wider conceptions of Divine immanence. The Evangelical hymns contain scarcely any references to the presence of God in Nature; rather, they picture Nature as outside the realm of Grace, and as a sphere wherein Christians are of necessity but 'strangers and sojourners', looking for their promised land in Heaven. Further, the Evangelicals expressly repudiated any idea of a general indwelling of the Divine in human nature. They

[1] See above, p. 178.

believed that mankind at large is 'in a natural state of alienation from God';[1] and that 'every man that is born, considered independently of the grace of God, is wholly corrupt, utterly impotent, and liable to everlasting torments'.[2] They were not interested in philosophy, theology, or Church history, and regarded the world and its culture with misgiving and suspicion.[3] Hence, while their message greatly intensified the consciousness of the Divine indwelling in the heart of the believer, it also had the effect of emphasizing more than ever the lack of the Divine presence in the world and humanity at large.

The spiritual and moral dynamic of Evangelicalism was at its height in the first forty years of the nineteenth century. After the passing of its great prophets, such as William Wilberforce (d. 1833) and Charles Simeon (d. 1836), Evangelical piety tended to harden into a scholastic theology and a rigid code of conduct, suspicious of all new thought and practice, and making little constructive contribution to the life of the Church. Of late, however, the Liberal Evangelical Movement has shown a fresh interest in theology, and in the doctrine of Divine immanence.[4]

*The Catholic Revival in England*

The Tractarian Movement, which proved to be the forerunner of the Anglo-Catholic Revival, had a much closer affinity with Romanticism than had the Evangelical Movement;[5] and from the beginning it encouraged a love of the beauty and richness of life, which was favourable to a recognition of the Divine indwelling over a wide range. But the early Tractarians shared with the old-fashioned Protestants of their day a

[1] Isaac Milner, *Sermons*, Vol. I, 1820, p. 5.

[2] John Overton, *The True Churchman*, 1802, p. 157; cf. W. Wilberforce, in his *Practical View*, 1797, p. 26: 'Man is tainted with sin radically and to the very core.'

[3] See Storr, *The Development of English Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, London, pp. 70-73. It is interesting, however, to note that many modern Evangelicals, such as Bishop E. A. Burroughs and Canon L. G. Buchanan, explicitly dissociate themselves from what they describe 'as the Dualistic Outlook' of the older Evangelicals. See *The Inner Life*, London, 1924, pp. 185 ff., 198 ff.

[4] See especially two recent volumes of essays: *Liberal Evangelicalism*, London, 1923, and *The Inner Life*, 1924. [5] Storr, op. cit., pp. 131f., 255f.

profound mistrust of the Evangelical insistence upon individual Christian experience of the indwelling God. They sought to meet men's instinctive desire for a God near at hand in other ways, and chiefly by a fresh emphasis upon the reality of the Divine presence in the Church and Sacraments. They taught that in a valid Eucharist, God's Real Presence in and under the forms of bread and wine is sure and certain, and independent of any human realization of the fact. In this way, they brought back into the Church the sense of the Divine nearness, especially in public worship. But here again, the Presence was limited; in this case by external conditions, such as the episcopal ordination of the officiating priest, and the repetition of 'valid' formulas of consecration.

Indeed, the outlook of early Tractarians was, in its way, quite as narrow as that of the early Evangelicals. The primary purpose of the famous *Tracts for the Times* (published from 1833 onwards) was to rebut all 'liberal' tendencies to recognize God's operation outside the bounds of Catholicism; and the negative note, which denied the reality (or at least, the certainty) of the Divine presence outside the Catholic tradition, was no less emphatic than the affirmation of the reality of the presence within it.

Towards the close of the nineteenth century, however, a school of Liberal Anglo-Catholicism arose, in which the problem of Divine immanence received scholarly consideration, to a much larger extent than among either the earlier Tractarians or the contemporary Evangelicals. Among the leaders of this school (many of whom had been personally influenced by the Idealist philosophers of their day at Oxford), the names of C. Gore, R. C. Moberly, J. R. Illingworth, and H. Scott Holland stand out prominently.

*Lux Mundi*

In 1889, a group of friends who shared in this type of thought published *Lux Mundi*, a joint volume of essays, in many ways reminiscent of the 'Broad Church' volume of *Essays and Reviews*, which had been published about thirty years before.[1]

[1] See below, p. 207.

But while *Essays and Reviews* was primarily concerned to vindicate liberty of thought, without regard to consequences, and was largely critical in its attitude to orthodox theology, the *Lux Mundi* writers were convinced of the possibility of reconciling Liberal thought with the Catholic Faith. In that endeavour, they and their friends were led to devote careful attention to the doctrine of Divine immanence; and it was largely through them that it was brought into the forefront of modern theological problems within the Church.

Among other books akin to *Lux Mundi* in general outlook were Illingworth's *Divine Immanence* (1898) and *Divine Transcendence* (1911); and in America, a series of books by Dr W. P. Du Bose, particularly his *Soteriology of the New Testament* (1906). Of these, Illingworth's *Divine Immanence* contained the fullest treatment of the subject that had up to that time appeared from a modern Church writer. His clear and careful discussion of the relation between 'matter' and 'spirit', and the impossibility of our conceiving of either in complete isolation from the other, has rarely been surpassed: and his warnings against the danger of defining God by spatial metaphors are as timely today as when they were written:

> Intensity, rather than extension, is the measure of worth. Personality is the true standard of reality.[1]

The writers of the *Lux Mundi* school are keenly aware of the difficulties involved in the idea of Divine immanence; but at the same time they ascribe to it a much larger place in the scheme of Christian doctrine than had hitherto been customary. Indeed at times they use language which seems to be leading towards an Immanentism almost as wide as that of the Idealistic philosophers. Thus Gore writes in *Lux Mundi*:

> Nature is one great body, and there is breath in the body; but this breath is not self-originated life, it is the influence of the Divine Spirit.[2]

Aubrey Moore further assures us that the idea of God as 'Occasional Visitor' is 'absolutely impossible';[3] and Illingworth bids us seek in our human nature for the analogy of the Divine

[1] pp. 51, 54.
[2] 1st ed., p. 318; later eds., p. 232.
[3] *Lux Mundi*, 1st ed., p. 90; later eds., p. 73.

indwelling, maintaining that just as our spirits are both immanent throughout all parts of our bodies (though not equally in all parts), and also operative through our actions beyond our bodies, so we may conceive of the indwelling of God as permeating all the world, but not limited within the world.[1]

This wide conception of Divine indwelling was facilitated by the abandonment of the doctrine of Biblical Infallibility, which separated the Bible from all other literature. By the *Lux Mundi* writers, the inspiration of the Bible is interpreted as essentially akin to the process by which God has inspired all noble literature;[2]—a conception which harmonizes well with the Wider Immanentism.

With regard to the Divine Incarnation in Christ, most of the writers of the *Lux Mundi* school emphasize the *oneness* of this with God's universal activity, rather than its essential *otherness*. For instance, R. C. Moberly, in his *Atonement and Personality*, expressly rejects the idea that there was in Jesus Christ any 'non-human' element:

> Whatever the reverence of their motive may be, men do harm to consistency and to truth, by keeping open, as it were, a sort of non-human sphere, or aspect, of the Incarnation. . . . By looking for the Divine side by side with the human, instead of discerning the Divine within the human, we miss the significance of them both.[3]

Other writers of the same school of thought wrote in similar terms.[4]

[1] *Divine Immanence*, pp. 65 ff.

[2] See, e.g., Gore in *Lux Mundi*, 1st ed., pp. 355, 358, etc.; later eds., pp. 259, 262.

[3] *Atonement and Personality*, Oxford, 1901, p. 97.

[4] E.g., in America, Dr W. P. Du Bose expressed this view in 1906 with great clarity, in his *Soteriology of the New Testament*, New York, 1906: 'Everything in the Man Christ Jesus is properly and truly human. . . . At no stage in the process could any law of human growth or becoming have been violated or transcended in Him; for He would then have ceased to be Man. But man, as man, is capable of communications of Divine knowledge, and there is no limit to his capacity for them; and no amount of this communication, though it be "without measure", makes him less, but more truly, man.'—p. 142 f.; cf. p. 124. A few years later, in 1914, even so orthodox an Anglo-Catholic as Bishop Weston of Zanzibar wrote: 'The limits of His [Christ's] self-manifestation were fixed at every moment by the capacity of the human soul that he had made His own.'—*The One Christ*, London, 1914, p. 159.

Now this conception of the Incarnation harmonizes much more readily with a wide view of Divine indwelling in mankind and the world at large than do those theories of the Incarnation which regard it as something entirely unlike all other known events in history. It is true that in either case, the Incarnation remains 'supernatural'; for the *Lux Mundi* writers hold firmly that Christ is *perfect* Man; not only more than other men, but *infinitely* more, and consequently beyond the range of any merely human efforts, which never could attain to infinite perfection. Yet even so, there is here no sharp dividing-line drawn between the Divine and the human; and the Incarnation, thus interpreted, presents no insuperable obstacle to an Immanentist view of life, which unites God, Man and Nature in an organic unity, pervaded throughout, in varying degrees, by the One Spirit.

It should be noted, however, that some of the *Lux Mundi* writers do lay emphasis upon the 'otherness' of the Incarnation. Thus Illingworth, while affirming the unity of the Incarnation with the cosmic process as a whole,[1] asserts at the same time that it is '*ex hypothesi* unique,—the sole and only possible occurrence of its kind'.[2] And in answer to the question: 'Is the universe God's body, or God's handiwork?' he replies that God is completely immanent in the Son, as His body; but in Creation only after a secondary manner, as in a handiwork.[3] Now whatever may be the precise significance of this distinction, it clearly separates the Incarnation of God in Christ from His indwelling in the rest of His creation. Indeed, whenever the *Lux Mundi* writers strive to combine their more liberal tendencies with the traditional formularies of the Church, a certain measure of inconsistency becomes apparent in their teaching. This is noticeable in their exposition of the doctrine of the Christian Sacraments. On the one hand, they put forward a wide conception of God's universal presence, and affirm that the 'sacramental principle' extends through all the world; but side by side with this they make special claims for the sacraments of the Church, as uniquely Divine, authoritative, and

[1] *Divine Immanence*, 1913 ed., p. 115 f.; cf. *Lux Mundi*, 1st ed., pp. 185 ff.; later eds., pp. 136 ff.

[2] *Divine Immanence*, p. 84. [3] Op. cit., p. 73.

unalterable.[1] It may seem to some readers that if the whole world is permeated throughout by Spirit, there is hardly sufficient warrant for restricting such tremendous claims to certain parts of it. But these writers are not conscious of any inconsistency between 'the Wider Immanentism' and the special claims which they make on behalf of the Church and its rites; indeed, they maintain that a truly Christian Immanentism is possible only on the basis of the full Catholic faith. Thus Aubrey Moore writes in *Lux Mundi:*

> Science . . . demands a unity in Nature which shall be not external, but immanent. . . . But this immanence of God in nature unitarian theism cannot give, save at the price of losing itself in pantheism. . . . It remains for Christianity. . . to bring forth out of its treasury. . . the old, almost forgotten truth of the immanence of the Word, the belief in God as 'creation's secret force'.[2]

Or again:

> The union of God's transcendence with His immanence is only consciously completed by the doctrine of the Trinity.[3]

It can hardly be said, however, that the suggestive claims thus made are substantiated with the careful argument that they demand. We are left wondering *how* it is that the idea of 'the immanence of the Word' and the doctrine of the Trinity help towards the solution of problems which cannot be solved by the simpler concept of the immanence of God. *Lux Mundi* seems to be content, like St. Thomas Aquinas,[4] to leave the two conceptions, of universal Divine immanence, and of the unique Divine incarnation in Christ, Church and Sacraments, standing side by side; and the emphasis (again like that of St. Thomas) has tended to fall more and more upon the Sacraments, as absolutely necessary for the realization of the Divine Presence.

In the later history of Anglo-Catholic theology, two divergent tendencies are manifest. On the one hand, some of its best-known exponents (among them, Bishop Gore) became increasingly aware of the dangers of Immanentism, and have

[1] See F. Paget in *Lux Mundi*, 1st ed., pp. 417–20, etc.; cf. Illingworth's *Divine Immanence*, Chap. vi, 'The Incarnation and Sacraments'.

[2] p. 102; in later eds., p. 75. [3] p. 55; later eds., p. 80.

[4] See above, p. 154.

taken a leading part in the modern reaction against it.[1] On the other hand, some of those whose traditions and sympathies at first associated them with Catholicism rather than with Protestantism, have proclaimed 'the Gospel of Immanentism' with more enthusiasm and consistency than even the most liberal of the Tractarians ever displayed.[2]

*Early 'Liberal' Theology in the Nineteenth Century*

Modern Liberal theology in England is partly derived from the Latitudinarian or 'Broad Church' School of the eighteenth century; but it has undergone many changes, and has added to the rather chilly intellectualism of its parent a warmer and more emotional note. The Broad Churchmen of the early nineteenth century, no less than the Tractarians, disliked the enthusiasm of the Evangelicals, and particularly their claim to be 'the temples of the Holy Ghost'.[3] They were still sufficiently under the influence of Deism to be content with a God afar off, and were too nervous of the charge of Pantheism to lay much stress upon the Divine immanence in Nature. This predominantly negative attitude towards the idea of Divine indwelling was characteristic of the 'Oriel School' at Oxford—E. Copleston, R. Whately, R. D. Hampden and T. Arnold—in the period 1820–60, and of their successors in the latter half of the century, such as Dean Stanley or Benjamin Jowett. It remained also largely true of the great Biblical scholars of a still later generation, Lightfoot, Westcott and Hort, who though not definitely associated with the 'Liberal' school, conducted their researches largely in a liberal spirit.

Yet although none of these devoted much direct consideration to the doctrine of Divine indwelling, they were laying down principles which in the long run contributed greatly to the revival of the doctrine; and indeed that revival took place chiefly where some of the principles of Liberal theology were accepted by men whose primary adherence was given to other schools of thought.

[1] See below, pp. 258–64. [2] See below, pp. 209 ff.

[3] An exception to this is found in F. W. Newman (1805–97) who, for all his extreme Radicalism, was in this respect more akin to the Evangelicals maintaining that 'Our Soul is that side of human nature upon which we are in contact with the Infinite.'—*The Soul*, London, 1849.

*Essays and Reviews*

These principles came into the limelight in the volume entitled *Essays and Reviews*, published in 1860 (a year after Darwin's *Origin of Species*) by a group of friends whose common bond was their passionate conviction of the right and the duty of honest thinking and fearless truth-speaking within the Church. Their attitude, both towards the Evangelical affirmation of the Indwelling Spirit in the believer, and towards the Catholic affirmation of the Indwelling Presence in the Sacraments, was rather negative and critical. But in these essays we can see the beginnings of a line of thought which proved to be intimately bound up with the revival of Immanentism; namely, the belief in the unity of all life, and the consequent unreality of the sharp dividing-line that orthodox Christianity (both Evangelical and High Church) laid down between human and divine, natural and supernatural. Nearly all the Essays lay stress upon this. Frederick Temple (afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury), in his opening essay on 'The Education of the World', pictures the human race as 'a colossal man, whose life reaches from the creation to the day of judgement'; and claims that 'we may rightly speak of a childhood, a youth, a manhood of the world'.[1] Such phrases (reminiscent of the Historical Idealism of Lessing and Herder, as well as of more recent theories of evolution) depict all history as a unity, with an immanent Divine purpose behind it, as wide as life itself. Again, Rowland Williams, in his Essay on 'Bunsen', pleads that we should 'widen the idea of Revelation for ourselves, and deepen it for others; not removing the footsteps of the Eternal from Palestine, but tracing them on other shores'.[2] Similarly, Baden Powell and Mark Pattison question the belief that the Evidences of Christianity can be based upon a positive external revelation which belongs to a different realm from that of knowledge in general.[3] *Essays and Reviews* thus offers a sharp challenge to all dualistic theories which separate the realm of Grace from that of Nature; and although the subject of Divine immanence receives little or no direct consideration, all this

[1] *Essays and Reviews*, London, 1860, p. 3.
[2] Op. cit., p. 51.
[3] Op. cit., p. 100 f, and p. 267.

marks the beginning of a 'monistic' type of thought within the English Church, which proved to be the forerunner of the 'Wider Immanentism' of modern times.

*Later Victorian Liberalism*

Not all the mid-Victorian Liberals were prepared to go as far as the authors of *Essays and Reviews*; but most of them show a similar tendency towards a wider and less dualistic conception of religion. This may be seen in the teaching of F. W. Robertson (1816–53) whose *Sermons* are still widely read today, and who was the translator of Lessing's *Education of the Human Race*. A kindred spirit was Frederick Denison Maurice (1805–72) who placed at the very heart of his teaching the nearness of God to man, and insisted that man is by nature the child of God, and not a 'child of wrath'.[1] Such teaching implied a challenge to the Dualism which underlay both the Protestant doctrine of the separation between the natural man and God, and also the Catholic doctrine of the separation between 'the world' and the Church. At the same time Maurice was well aware of the dangers of Pantheism, and contended that Christianity offers a 'middle way' (*Mesothesis*) between Deism and Pantheism.[2] He thus clearly envisaged the main problem of Christian Immanentism.

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, the Liberal school in the Church made few notable contributions to our subject; but liberal principles were spreading, both among the Evangelicals and Catholics, and also among the leaders of the Free Churches, who were beginning to make an increasingly important contribution to English theology.[3] The old insularity of English theology was also being modified by a larger measure of contact with continental theologians. The

[1] See Storr, op. cit., pp. 340–53.

[2] For F. D. Maurice's Immanentism, see C. C. J. Webb, *Religious Thought in England*, Oxford, 1933, pp. 84–7.

[3] T. Erskine (d. 1870), A. Geddes and McLeod Campbell (d. 1872) in Scotland, and J. Martineau (1805-1900) and J. Pye Smith (d. 1851) in England, exercised an influence far beyond their own denominations; and towards the close of the nineteenth century, English theology became increasingly interdenominational in character.

result of all this was a synthesis of many types of thought; and in particular, a fusion of liberal ideas with those of other schools, in forms perhaps less strictly logical, but in their outlook more comprehensive. It was out of this fusion that the revival of Immanentism in England mainly sprang. Its chief exponents were men who for the most part did not bear the clear label of any one Church-party; though most of them were more or less liberal, many of them sympathetic to Catholicism, and some of them decisively Protestant. It was not until the opening years of the twentieth century that this revival appeared in full vigour; and its development took place along a number of parallel lines.

*Christian Immanentism in the Early Twentieth Century*

Although the nineteenth century saw the growth of many influences which favoured the revival of Immanentism in the Church, even up to the end of the century there were but few signs of it in theological circles. But with the opening of the twentieth century, the doctrine of Divine immanence suddenly leapt into the forefront of theological discussion, and was proclaimed on all sides with the fervour of a new Gospel. It seemed as if the time for this was just ripe. The twentieth century had inherited the self-confidence and optimism that had been generated by the theory of evolution, and was stimulated by growing material prosperity; and it was inclined to think either that the world could get along very well by itself without God, or that God could be recognized as the indwelling Guide directing the general course of events. The Great War had not yet flung down its challenge to this optimism. It was natural, therefore, that the early years of the new century should be marked by an 'immanentist' interpretation of Christianity.

Even a cursory review of the theological books published in the first quarter of the twentieth century will show what a large number of them deal, directly or indirectly, with this subject. Illingworth's *Divine Immanence* (1898) may be regarded as ushering in this series; and thereafter, books on similar themes followed in quick succession.

The following is a selection of some of the more important of these:

1905. *The Immanence of God*, by E. P. Browne (Boston). A careful discussion of the problems involved, and especially of the relation between the 'natural' and the 'supernatural'.

1906. *The Diviner Immanence*, by F. J. McConnell (New York). 'The most absorbing theme at present before theologians is the doctrine of Divine immanence' (p. 9). The author interprets it in terms of 'fatherly nearness' (p. 158).

1906. *The Knowledge of God*, by H. M. Gwatkin (Cambridge). 'The Universe is an organic whole' (Vol. I, p. 143). 'Immanence means that the common works of Nature are as truly divine acts as anything we can imagine done by a miracle' (p. 277). The ecclesiastical Dualisms between 'nature' and 'grace' are rejected (p. 143), but the need for a moral Dualism is maintained (p. 92).

1907. *The New Theology*, by R. J. Campbell (London). 'A re-statement of the fundamentals of the Christian Faith in terms of the Immanence of God' (p. 3). 'There is no dividing-line between our being and God's from our side' (p. 34). 'Jesus was God; but so are we' (p. 94).

1909. *God With Us*, by Boyce Gibson (London). 'God is the Intimate, rather than the Ultimate.'

1912. *Foundations*, by Seven Oxford Scholars, follows the 'group-methods' of *Essays and Reviews* and *Lux Mundi*; but does not altogether share the former's confidence in modern Liberalism, nor the latter's unquestioning acceptance of the Church's Creeds.[1] Most of the writers view life as a unity, without a sharp division between natural and supernatural. Some of them are dissatisfied with the term 'immanence' as being materialistic, and would replace it by terms more suggestive of God's personal action.[2]

Similar books continued to appear during the years of the Great War:—

1915. *Immanence in Christian Thought*, by F. Platt (London). A careful historical review of the subject.

1916–19. The 'Cumnor Group' books:[3] *Concerning Prayer* (London, 1916), *Immortality* (1917), and *The Spirit* (1919). These follow largely in the tradition of *Foundations*. The Presence in the Sacraments is interpreted along the lines of psychological association, rather than of

[1] E.g., N. S. Talbot (afterwards Bishop of Pretoria) assures us that 'Mid-Victorian Liberalism is bankrupt' (p. 7); and W. Temple (afterwards Archbishop of York) frankly criticizes 'the substance-theology' of the Creeds and Councils as 'unscientific' (p. 231).

[2] See below, p. 218.

[3] Written by a group of friends who used to meet at Miss Lily Dougall's house at Cumnor, Oxford.

indwelling substance; and the moral limitations of Divine immanence are strongly insisted upon.

1917. *The Idea of God*, by A. S. Pringle-Pattison (Oxford); also his *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion*, Oxford, 1930. The writer advocates a more thorough-going Immanentism than others of the Cumnor Group; God is almost identified with the processes of Nature, and Christian doctrine is interpreted in a 'Hegelian' way, as a particular expression of creation-wide truths.

1917. *Mens Creatrix*, by W. Temple (London). This, and other of Temple's later writings, when compared with his contributions to *Foundations*, show an increasing tendency to lay stress upon the Transcendence of God, and the uniqueness of the Incarnation in Christ (p. 317, etc.).

After the War, in spite of the incoming of the reaction against Liberalism, books advocating the 'Wider Immanentism' continued to appear for some time; for example

1926. *Reality*, by B. H. Streeter, and *Adventure*, edited by B. H. Streeter, 1927. These books seek to show how a unified, scientific view of the Universe may be combined with the religious sense of distinctive values in life.

1927. *The Divinity in Man*, by J. W. Graham (London). Advocates an extreme type of Immanentism. 'God and man are one'; 'We men are the hands and feet of God' (pp. 17, 61).

1931. *The Natural and the Supernatural*, by J. Oman (Cambridge); also his *Grace and Personality*, Cambridge, 1917. These offer a searching criticism of the impersonal conception of God's operations, both in Catholic and in Protestant theology, and urge that Divine indwelling must be always personal, and always ethical.

This list will suffice to indicate how large a place this theme has occupied in modern English theology; and a further indication of the prominent place which it still holds, not only among theologians, but in the general thought of the Church, may be seen in the *Report of the Lambeth Conference of Bishops held in 1930*, particularly in the Report of the Committee on 'The Christian Doctrine of God'. In this, we read of 'the unity of creation', of 'the emergence of new qualities of life', and of a God who, while transcendent, is 'continuously active within creation by His immanent activity'. We are told that 'the Divine and the human are not mutually exclusive'; and that the Incarnation in Christ marks 'the attainment of the purpose of the whole cosmic process, through the agency of the immanent

Logos'.[1] A few decades earlier, such language would have sounded strange to the Lambeth Fathers themselves; and to Simeon or Pusey it would probably have savoured of rank heresy. But in 1930, it expressed a point of view widely adopted by the more thoughtful members of the Church; though perhaps (as is not uncommon in episcopal utterances) it reflected the sentiments of an age that was passing rather than coming. Indeed even while the Lambeth *Report* was being written, signs were already apparent of the reaction against Immanentism which has since then become the outstanding feature of still more modern theology. For the moment, however, the *Report* marked the prevalence within Anglican orthodoxy (and not within Anglicanism alone) of a widespread recognition of universal Divine Immanence, which was held side by side with the traditional Catholic claim to finality in Christ. Of this comprehensive attitude, a shrewd continental observer has said: 'It makes Anglican Catholicism that carefully balanced, subtle, and elusive reality, which is never fully and adequately defined, but which is so eminently suited to the English character.'[2]

## B. The Gospel of Immanentism

Now that we have briefly reviewed the chief historical landmarks in the revival of Immanentism in the nineteenth century, it may be well to try and gather up the main characteristics of its message.

### *The Gospel of Immanentism was felt to be the Re-discovery of a Forgotten Truth*

Behind this revival lay the motive-power of emotion as well as of intellect. Its advocates were 'prophets', who believed that they had discovered something new and thrilling—something which had been overlooked or forgotten by the Church, but which ought rightly to be part of the Church's heritage. So there was a ring of enthusiasm discernible in the very titles of their books: *The New Theology—The Diviner Immanence—God with Us—The Divinity in Man.* Sometimes we meet with

[1] *Report*, pp. 66–9.

[2] W. A. Visser 't Hooft, *Le Catholicisme Non-Romain*, Paris, 1933; English translation (by the author himself), *Anglo-Catholicism and Orthodoxy*, London, 1933, p. 61.

an almost mystic fervour; sometimes with a vehement antagonism to the 'external God of the Churches'.[1] In either case, we find the 'prophetic' note, sounded by men who believe that God has spoken to them, and given them a commission to proclaim 'what the Spirit is saying to the Churches'.

The welcome extended to the new teaching showed that the idea of Divine immanence was meeting a real need of the human soul, and that where it had been overlooked the soul was not fully satisfied.

*It was hailed as the Proclamation of a Wider Gospel and a Greater God*

The God of the nineteenth century Churches (whether Catholic or Protestant) seemed to the prophets of Immanentism to be in practice limited to a restricted sphere, and to have very little to do with the wide world which He was supposed to have made. Among the strict Evangelicals, the experience of the Spirit seemed to be regarded as the private property of a small group of 'the godly'; and with the Anglo-Catholics, the Divine Presence was still more carefully restricted to certain rites and ceremonies, in which the omission of even a small detail might cause the loss of His presence, and the 'invalidating' of His grace. Such a God might be 'small and useful' for the Church; but thoughtful men found it hard to identify Him with the Lord God Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, or to believe that the barriers which the Church insisted upon maintaining between things sacred and secular, natural and supernatural, were more than man-made and artificial fences.

So the idea of a Divine indwelling in all creation, transcending or abolishing such divisions, was hailed by many as a majestic conception which carried its own conviction to the soul, uplifting and enriching our whole thought of God and of the world. Men of many diverse schools began to proclaim, as a great new truth, that the universe is an organic whole, animated throughout (albeit in varying measure) by One Spirit, who 'sleeps in the plant, dreams in the animal, and wakes in man'.[2]

[1] Graham, *The Divinity in Man*, p. 16.

[2] Forbes Robinson, *The Self-Limitation of God*, p. 12; cf. H. M. Gwatkin, *The Knowledge of God*, Vol. II, p. 276 f.

It is in the midst of this 'whole' that the acts of God in Christ, in the Church and in the Bible, are set by the Immanentist theologians; not (as in the older orthodoxies) belonging to a separate, supernatural order of events, but as notable and supreme examples of principles that operate throughout the universe. The Incarnation of God in Christ is viewed as the crown and climax of His indwelling throughout the universe in various modes; His presence in the Church as the supreme example of His presence in humanity at large; His inspiration of the Bible as one with the inspiration of all noble literature; and His grace in the Christian Sacraments as akin to the association of 'spirit' with 'matter' which we meet with in so many departments of life—through the symbolic act, the spoken word, or the written letter. The unity of life remains unbroken by any claim for 'otherness' at certain specific points where the supernatural is alleged to have broken in upon the universal order.

As an example of this interpretation of the Incarnation, we may quote W. H. Moberly, in *Foundations*:

> The Incarnation and the Atonement are permanent elements in the life of God. . . . World-history is something in which He genuinely partakes. . . . If Man is bound to God, . . . this relation is grounded in the very nature of God Himself. . . . The union of God and man is necessary to the full reality of either. Christian Theism differs from other theism largely by its emphasis on immanence; and this is not nearly enough realized.[1]

Hastings Rashdall is no less explicit in refusing to separate the Incarnation from the general process of Divine indwelling in man:

> Human nature *is* the same in principle as the Divine; and the highest human life *is* a revelation of God. . . . It is impossible to maintain that God is fully incarnate in Christ, and not incarnate at all in anyone else.[2]

Similarly, Streeter, in a suggestive passage in *Adventure*, interprets the Incarnation in Christ as 'not an *exhaustive*, nor an *exclusive*, but rather a *distinctive* expression of God'.[3] In other words, while in Christ we see an expression of the *central* element in God's being—perfect Love—we do not claim that everything in the Divine finds expression there, or that nothing

[1] pp. 510–12. [2] *God and Man*, Oxford, 1910, pp. 58, 73.
[3] *Adventure*, p. 150; cf. Platt's *Immanence in Christian Thought*, p. 377.

in the Divine is expressed elsewhere. Now if the distinctive quality of the Incarnation is found in its manifestation of *love*, rather than in some super-human 'substance' in Jesus, then the Incarnation clearly falls, 'within the lines of an experience humanly normal in constitution'[1] and within the unity of the life-process as a whole, with which, in all its higher forms, *love* is so intimately interwoven.

In the same way, the Gospel of Immanentism seeks to include the Sacraments and the Bible (which in Catholic theology are invested with a certain supernatural quality, through their association with the Incarnation) within the larger unity of universal Divine indwelling. The operation of the Sacraments is interpreted in accordance with the known laws of psychology, as that of a symbol, pregnant with meaning and associations, upon the receptive soul; or that of a 'language', by which spirit can speak to spirit through agreed material symbols.[2] The inspiration of the Bible is included under the wider conception of the influence of the Divine Spirit upon humanity at large, bringing the Biblical writers, not infallibility, but 'an enhanced perception of higher values'.[3] 'Not all Biblical writers were equally inspired; nor is inspiration limited to them.'[4]

Even the Christian experience of the indwelling God in the soul, which to the early Evangelicals seemed to be wholly supernatural, is explained from this point of view as a supreme example of the general law of 'the interpenetrability of personalities'[5], and consequently part of a universal process. It is pointed out that the sense of 'otherness' is not by itself a conclusive proof of the Divine authority of an experience: otherwise, we should be compelled to acknowledge the atheism of Nietzsche or the anti-Christian views of H. G. Wells as divinely inspired; for these men certainly believed that these convictions of theirs were 'given' to them.[6] It is only when the experience

[1] H. R. Mackintosh, *The Person of Christ*, Edinburgh, 1915, p. 469.

[2] See C. W. Emmet on 'The Psychology of Grace', and L. Dougall, on 'The Language of the Soul', both in *The Spirit*, pp. 161 ff. and pp. 227 ff.

[3] B. H. Streeter in *Reality*, p. 112. [4] R. Brook in *Foundations*, p. 69.

[5] R. T. Howard in *The Inner Light*, p. 77; cf. Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God*, p. 263.

[6] See Emmet, 'The Psychology of Inspiration', in *The Spirit*, pp. 22 ff.

of inspiration harmonizes with the highest moral standards of humanity that its Divine origin can be trusted.

Along these many lines, the Gospel of Immanentism seemed to offer a vision of God and His working, which was broader, more majestic, more unified than that which traditional theology had sanctioned; and so it was welcomed by many as the Good News of a greater and more worshipful God.

*It claimed to be based upon the scientific Principles of Relativism and Universality*

The scientific temper of the later nineteenth century found itself increasingly opposed to the supernatural claims of the older orthodoxies; and as that temper spread within the Church, it led to a growing protest by Christian theologians against what they felt to be the unproved assertions and unjustifiable negations of traditional Christianity. The Church's claim to possess final and absolute truth was questioned by an increasing number of Christians, as beyond the range of possible proof. Many of these fully believed in the *supremacy* of Christian doctrine and practice above all others, but held, with Dr Oman, that 'finality, so far from being essential to our standards of truth, beauty, and goodness, would be a denial of their endless possibility'.[1]

The scientific temper also questioned the traditional Dualism which separated the Church from the world, God from man, the realm of Grace from that of Nature; for Science seemed to give no confirmation to the theory that any such divisions really exist, at any rate along the lines marked out by orthodoxy.

Another dogma of traditional Christianity which the Wider Immanentism rejected as unscientific was the doctrine of Creation *ex nihilo*, which separated the initial Divine Act of Creation from all the known processes of Nature. 'The Divine Eremite, as a Pre-existent Creator,' says Pringle-Pattison, is 'a figure of the imagination.'[2] Even the assumption that man is separate from the rest of creation because he alone possesses a 'soul' that is worthy of God's care and love, and that 'the beasts that perish' lie outside the scope of salvation, was denounced

[1] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 337.

[2] *The Idea of God*, p. 295.

by some as an unwarrantable 'unsouling' of vast realms of life that are really permeated by the Spirit of God.[1]

Against all such ecclesiastical and theological dogmas, the immanentists claimed that their wide vision of the Divine indwelling in all life was in accord with true Science; not indeed with the materialistic Science of the Victorian Era, but with the less dogmatic Science of more recent times, which, while insisting (perhaps even more firmly than did the Materialists) that all human knowledge is only relative and partial, is nevertheless prepared to allow for the existence of values which cannot be measured by its own methods. 'Relativism' and 'Universality', two of the distinctive notes of the Wider Immanentism, were thus notes which it claimed to share with Science. In opposition to the traditional theology of the Church, it was suspicious of any *a priori* limitations of the idea of Divine indwelling and even more suspicious of any claim to possess or present this indwelling in an 'absolute' form, such as to preclude further investigation.

### C. The Difficulties Involved in Christian Immanentism

While the Gospel of Immanence was thus being proclaimed with great enthusiasm within the Church in the early years of the present century, its more thoughtful exponents were by no means unaware of the difficulties and problems involved in it. Some of these deserve consideration at this point, although most of them will call for fuller consideration later on, when we come to study the modern reaction against Immanentism. But these difficulties were first recognized and set forth clearly by those who may be regarded as exponents, rather than opponents, of Christian Immanentism.

#### *The Inadequacy of the Substance-Theology and the Immanentism based upon it, to describe the Action of a Personal God*

Ever since the days of the great Œcumenical Councils, which adopted the terminology of Greek philosophy in the fourth

[1] Edmund Holmes, 'Two or One?' in the *Hibbert Journal*, April 1926, pp. 409–10.

century A.D., the Divine nature has generally been described in orthodox Christian theology in terms of 'substance'. This conception was incorporated into the Creeds, and the Catholic theology of the Sacraments, as well as into some forms of Protestant theology.[1] But many of the modern writers who favoured a wider conception of Divine indwelling were inclined at the same time to question the adequacy of this 'substance-theology' to express the Divine Nature, or the Divine mode of indwelling. A notable expression of this was given by W. Temple in *Foundations*, where he criticizes the traditional definitions of the Nature of God and the manner of His indwelling:

> The 'substance' of the Greek Fathers, whether divine or human, has the material, not the spiritual, characteristics; it is, in fact, an intangible matter. God consists of one sort; man of another. The Incarnation is found precisely in the communication of the divine substance to man through the union of the two natures.[1] According to that theory, Christ took human nature as a 'thing'; and in the Eucharistic Sacrament, a continuation of the Incarnation, the receiver takes into his own substance the Divine Substance.[2]

Such a conception of God Temple holds to be unsatisfactory, because 'it ignores the will, and with it the moral problem'.[3] He considers the Formula of Chalcedon, which is based upon this substance-theology, to be 'a confession of the bankruptcy of Greek Patristic theology'.[4] In place of the 'substance-theology', he advocates an interpretation of the Divine in terms of personality, will and character. He suggests that in the Incarnation, Christ is Divine, not because a Divine (non-human) 'substance' is within Him, but because His *character* is the character of God, and the content of His *will* is the same as that of God's will. What he considers to be involved in the idea of Personality, he sets forth more fully in *The Nature of Personality*, where he tells us that a 'person' is the term most opposite to a 'thing', and that personality implies purpose, freedom and love.[5]

Not all contemporary theologians, however, share Temple's predilection for the term 'person' to describe the nature of God.

[1] *Foundations*, p. 231. [2] Op. cit., p. 231, note 2.
[3] Op. cit., p. 230. [4] Op. cit., pp. 218, 248, etc.
[5] *The Nature of Personality*, pp. 3, 20, 27, 76 ff. etc.

Even by some of the Modernist school, it is, at most accepted as a regrettable necessity. Thus Canon M. G. Glazebrook writes:

> In so far as 'personality' means something which is negative and limited, it is singularly inappropriate as a description of the Infinite and Eternal. Its use is a burden most offensive to those who are most reflective. . . . Yet we would not altogether divorce the conception of God from personality.[1]

Rashdall, also, dealing with the Doctrine of the Trinity, speaks of the introduction of the term 'persons' to describe the distinctions within the Divine mind as 'fatal'.[2] Temple, however, following the tradition of Lotze, maintains that true 'personality' is something of which human personality is only an imperfect reflection—something which exists in perfection only in God; and that in any case the term 'person', in spite of all its limitations, is more adequate for describing the nature of God than any impersonal term. If we speak of ourselves as 'persons', therefore, we should think of God as 'super-personal', rather than 'sub-personal' or impersonal.[3] Temple's dissatisfaction with the substance-theology is shared by many other writers of this period, who, while anxious to extend the Christian recognition of Divine indwelling, are also anxious to dissociate this from material conceptions.[4]

The reaction against the substance-theology led also to a restatement of the Doctrine of the Sacraments, and of the Divine indwelling in the human soul. The idea of 'grace', as popularly held, and also as expounded by many orthodox theologians, has generally been that of 'a secret Divine energy, due solely to omnipotence, and acting on the human will with irresistible pressure—a quasi-physical force, stored within the Church, and applied to the soul-substance in its subconscious depths'.[5] Some

[1] *The Faith of a Modern Churchman*, London, 1918, p. 9.

[2] *God and Man*, p. 77.

[3] *The Nature of Personality*, London, 1911, pp. 62, 80 f., etc. Cf. Webb, *Problems in the Relations of God and Man*, London, 1911, p. 279, and *God and Personality*, London, 1918, Chaps. ii–iv.

[4] E.g., W. N. Clarke, in *The Christian Doctrine of God*, Edinburgh, 1909, p. 319, says: 'God is not an omnipotent Essence; and His Transcendence does not consist in local separation from us, nor in quantitative excess over us.'

[5] H. R. Mackintosh, in *E.R.E.*, Vol. VI, p. 366*b*, Art. 'Grace.'

such conception is almost inevitably suggested by such metaphors as 'channels of grace' or 'the infusion of grace'.[1] But to many, this conception is unsatisfactory. C. W. Emmet, for instance, writes:

> The mechanical conception of grace is based on something lower than personal influence as seen at its best between man and man; much less can it do justice to what happens between man and God.[2]

In place of this Emmet suggests, as a more helpful picture of the way by which God gives Himself to men, the analogy of the 'inspiration' of the members of an orchestra by its conductor, whose personal influence is conveyed in a potent manner, but by ways less rigid or material than a 'channel'.[3]

Another vigorous critic of the idea of a 'substantial', impersonal indwelling of God, whether in Christ, Sacraments, or the Christian soul, is Dr J. Oman. In his *Grace and Personality*, he insists that the relation between men and God must be conceived of primarily as a personal relationship, in which there must be a response from man, as well as an act of God, so that the process 'embraces giver and receiver in one fellowship'.[4] Catholic and Evangelical alike, he says, have misconceived of grace as 'the operation of omnipotence directed by omniscience'.[5] They have set arbitrary limits to the sphere of the Divine fellowship with man, and have treated the rest of experience as irrelevant for the higher religious values—'mere scenery for operations of grace which are canalized in special channels'.[6] Against this dualism, Oman sets forth the conception of a God personally working (not statically dwelling) everywhere, so that His operation is better conceived of in terms of 'influence' than of 'indwelling'.[7]

The results of this criticism of the idea of God as 'substance' have been twofold. On the one hand, because *personal* acts are

[1] See Dr E. L. van Becelaere in *E.R.E.*, Vol. VI, p. 367 ff., Art. 'Grace, Doctrine of, Roman Catholic'.

[2] In his essay on 'The Psychology of Grace' in *The Spirit*, p. 166; cf. Miss Dougall's chapter on 'The Language of the Soul', op. cit., pp. 227 ff.

[3] Op. cit., p. 161 f. [4] *Grace and Personality*, p. 28.

[5] Op. cit. p. 19. [6] Op. cit., p. 163. [7] Op. cit., pp. 143 ff.

more elastic than impersonal operations, and less rigidly tied to one particular process, there has been a widening of the conception of the Divine indwelling, and a new readiness to recognize it in spheres hitherto supposed to be outside the influence. On the other hand, the very same criticism has led to a fresh limitation of the idea of Divine indwelling in another direction. For if God is essentially personal, the Divine Indwelling, in its higher forms, will be found *only* in persons; in other words, only in the spirit of man, and in the higher moral qualities of human spirits; but not in mere 'things', nor even in spirits which are predominantly evil. This consideration has led to misgivings as to the adequacy of the term 'immanence' or even 'indwelling', to describe the Divine presence from the Christian point of view. Thus W. Temple writes:

> What 'indwells' in the physical universe cannot be a Person; . . . it must be a principle, therefore it is not the God of Religion; it is 'It' and not 'He'. . . . To speak of an 'immanent Purpose' is very good sense, but 'an immanent Will' is nonsense. . . . Our great concern then is to know the character of this World-Principle. . . . And if we declare that it is fully revealed only in a Person, we shall at once be involved in the belief that it is something more than could even be immanent in its fulness in the physical world.[1]

So we see that these criticisms of the ideas of 'substance', 'immanence', and 'impersonal indwelling', although springing largely from schools of Christian theology which are friendly to the idea of the wider immanence of God, nevertheless have to some extent undermined the idea of Divine immanence as held within the Church, and have thus contributed to the recent reaction against Immanentism.

*The Limitation of the Divine Indwelling, by (a) the Moral Law, (b) the 'Laws of Nature', and (c) the Autonomy of Human Personality*

The Christian Immanentists, in their rejection of the older ecclesiastical limitations of the Divine indwelling, sometimes affirmed broadly that 'God is everything'. But as they realized more clearly the implications of such an assertion, some of them

[1] *Foundations*, p. 244 f.

began to utter warnings that it is impossible for Christians to affirm the Divine indwelling in all things, without some limitations; and these proved to be among the factors in the reaction against Immanentism, which will come before us in the next chapter.

(*a*) *The limitations imposed by the Moral Law.* Most of the Christian Immanentists, while inclined to affirm in theory that God is 'in everything', hesitated in practice to say that He is 'in evil'. For instance, Miss Dougall, writing in *The Spirit* on the subject of 'God in Action', urges that if we say that God is in everything, evil as well as good, we destroy the distinctive Christian conception of God as Love, which is the heart of the Gospel. It is a profanation (she says) for a Christian to think of God as the author of sickness, sorrow, and sin; although we recognize that He does enable us, by His Spirit, to turn those evils to some extent into good.

> The God of the fatalist is not the God of the Christian; and the effort of Christian thought to combine these two characters in one Being is the chief cause of the practical atheism widespread in all ranks of society, and among nominal Christians.[1]

In other words, the universal immanence of a good God is limited by the existence of evil; and the apparent consistency of thorough-going Immanentism has to yield to the demands of the moral law.

(*b*) *The limitations imposed by the Laws of Nature.* The Christian Immanentists did not find it easy to combine the fixed Laws of Nature and the personal freedom of God under the same conception; and though they generally sought to minimize this contrast, and rejected the clear-cut division between the natural and the supernatural, they did not succeed in wholly removing the inherent dualism. The only conception of the universe which is consistent with the Christian revelation of God, according to Miss Dougall, is that of

> A universe in all its parts alive and interpenetrated with spirit, but with spirit which is not God, nor wholly in harmony

[1] *The Spirit*, pp. 50 ff. Miss Dougall points out that 'while popular theology often ascribes calamity to *God*, it never ascribes it to the Holy Spirit'; and that this implies a tacit recognition of a certain inconsistency of thought.

> with the transcendent Spirit of God; in all things open in greater or less degree to the influence of God. . . . Only a God thus conditioned could be the loving Father revealed by Christ.[1]

Similarly, Dr A. E. Garvie, speaking of the Universe as 'God's Self-Emptying' (*Kenosis*), points out that these types of life which are *nearest* to Him are *least* completely under His control;[2] and Dr C. J. Cadoux, whose views are markedly immanentist, bids us think of God as 'working *under the limits* of the evolutionary process'.[3] Such phrases recognize that at the heart of things there is a certain dualism between Nature and God.

(*c*) *The limitations imposed by human personality.* The 'Gospel of Immanentism' has also to reckon with difficulties in its conception of the Divine indwelling in the human soul. It does indeed deprecate any attempt to differentiate sharply between the human and the Divine in the process, and presents us with a wide, unified conception of Divine inspiration:

> The outside element, the divine entering into the human spirit, is indeed a reality, and does indeed make a difference; but it is not confined to any one type of communion, nor is it ever found in isolation from the human contribution.[4]

But still, the Divine and the human are not merged into one; and the 'difference' remains.

Nor is the autonomy of the human personality annulled by the process of Divine indwelling. The results of that process are seen, not in a slow, impersonal moral progress of the world, but in the illumination of the minds of individual men and women, who retain their own personality throughout. Not even in the highest forms of mystical union with God is there any replacing of the human by the Divine, or the emptying of the human in order to be filled with God. Says Dr Oman: 'A really independent moral personality is not a lake at low water and an arm of the sea at high.'[5] Dr Hastings Rashdall is equally clear that the immanence of God is in some sense limited by the autonomy of human personalities:

[1] *God's Way with Man*, London, 1924, p. 33.
[2] *The Christian Doctrine of the Godhead*, 1925, pp. 246 ff.
[3] *Essays in Christian Thinking*, Chaps. vi and vii.
[4] Emmet, 'The Psychology of Inspiration' in *The Spirit*, p. 215.
[5] *Grace and Personality*, p. 14; cf. p. 258.

> God is limited by all other beings in the universe, in so far as He is not those selves. . . . In the frank recognition of this limitation of God's power lies the only solution of the problem of evil which does not either destroy the goodness of God or destroy moral distinctions altogether. Any sense in which the Divine penetrates the individual consciousness must leave the individual his full individuality, personality and reality.[1]

Thus the Gospel of Immanence, as proclaimed by the Christian theologians of the last generation, with all its genuine note of enthusiasm and conviction, was not unaware of its own limitations. It did not claim to be more than one aspect of truth; it recognized that it could not claim to be a complete system of thought without imperilling certain complementary truths which are essential in the Christian view of life. Yet even the limited recognition for which it asked has hardly been permanently secured for it in the Church; for the Gospel of Immanentism was soon overshadowed by the reaction against it.

[1] H. Rashdall, 'Personality, Human and Divine', an essay in *Personal Idealism*, ed. by H. Sturt, London, 1902, p. 390 f.

# CHAPTER XIII

## THE POST-WAR REACTION AGAINST IMMANENTISM

### A. The Causes of the Reaction

We have seen that the early years of the twentieth century witnessed an increasing emphasis by Christian teachers upon the Divine indwelling, as a vital truth which had been partly lost sight of in current presentations of Christianity. This emphasis persisted for some time after the Great War, particularly among English-speaking theologians, and is by no means without its exponents in our day.

Nevertheless there have been signs, increasingly evident since the close of the War, that the main current of Christian thought in the West is now turning in the opposite direction. The most vital movements in present-day European Christianity, and those which have best succeeded in capturing the allegiance of the younger generation, have been those in which the transcendence of God, and the 'absolute' claims of the Christian Revelation, have been uncompromisingly asserted.

Some, at least, of the causes of this are apparent. First among them is the psychological effect of the Great War upon the minds of all those who were led to reflect upon its significance, especially in the countries which suffered most from its ravages. The whole conception of an indwelling God working out His purpose through the orderly development of history was challenged by the sudden thrusting-up of pain, sorrow, hate, death, in all their stark nakedness, and on a scale altogether without precedent. What signs were there in all this of evolution, of benevolent purpose, or of an emergent Kingdom of God? In such a world, the all-pervading God of Immanentism proved elusive and unsatisfying.[1] No wonder that many began to go back, and

[1] As early as 1912, W. E. Hocking had remarked: 'The near-by deity of immanence proves in experience to be a baffling object of worship.

question whether their old optimistic view of life did not need re-examination from its very roots.

Another rather unexpected challenge to Immanentism came from the side of radical Biblical criticism and theology. At the very beginning of the twentieth century, Schweitzer and the 'Eschatologists' were propounding a theory that the Christ of the New Testament was in reality very different from the well-balanced ethical teacher whom the Liberals had delighted to picture as 'the historical Jesus', but who in reality had been a strange person, full of un-modern ideas, eagerly expecting the coming of God's Kingdom—and this, not through the orderly evolution of natural processes, but by a purely miraculous in-breaking of God from Heaven.[1] In this eschatological interpretation of the Gospel, Divine immanence could play little or no part.

The reaction against Immanentism received support also from more orthodox Christian thinkers. Those who held strongly to the tradition of historic Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant, began to realize that the doctrines of the Divine Transcendence, the unique Sonship of Christ, and the absoluteness of the Christian Revelation, were being endangered by the 'Relativism' which was generally associated with the idea of universal Divine immanence. Others again feared lest the emphasis on Divine immanence in all things should obscure the moral cleavage between right and wrong, and relieve the individual from the vital consciousness of personal moral obligation.

Thus from many quarters, influences were at work, even before the Great War, foreshadowing the widespread reaction against Monism, Immanentism, Liberalism, and Optimism, which is perhaps the most outstanding feature of European religious thought in the present day.

Paradoxically enough, He is not so accessible as the unreachable God.' (*The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, London, 1912, pp. 328 f.)

[1] A. Schweitzer, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, Tübingen, 1906, pp. 362 ff.; English translation by H. Montgomery, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, London, 1910, Chap. xix. Cf. also Schweitzer, *Des Messianitäts und Leidensgeheimniss*, Tübingen, 1901. An estimate of Schweitzer's 'Eschatological Theory' will be found in the present writer's *Primitive Christian Eschatology*, Cambridge, 1911.

## B. The Reaction against Immanentism from the Side of Philosophy and of Science

The modern attack upon Immanentism, though primarily theological, is associated with parallel tendencies in the fields of Philosophy and Science, which are notably illustrated in two recent books.[1]

Tennant's *Philosophical Theology* approaches the problem of immanence along the lines of philosophic argument, and with devastating results. One after another, the older theories are swept away. Spinoza is briefly dismissed;[2] the ideas of Plato, Plotinus, and the Neo-Platonists are described as mere 'imaginative art';[3] those of Augustine and of Descartes, as 'baseless fancies'.[4] Indeed, any kind of Divine indwelling in inert matter is held by Tennant to be 'meaningless', or at most, 'a convenient way of describing God's *action upon* physical nature'.[5] The only definition of Divine immanence in Nature which he will endorse is a very abstract one. He describes it as 'a continual directive or creative activity of God, which compensates for the possible waywardness of the world-constituents'. It is (he says) that through which all things consist, and continue to consist, as a purpose-realizing cosmos, instead of disrupting, in virtue of their delegated spontaneity, and independence, into a purpose-foiling aggregate'.[6]

In this sense, he holds that 'theism has a use for the conception of Divine immanence, if not a need of it'.[7] But this philosophical conception, while free from many of the difficulties inherent in the use of more 'material' symbols, is devoid of emotional or moral content. It fails to convey any suggestion of the 'felt Presence' in Nature that stirred Wordsworth so deeply, or to express the wonder which moved Wallace as he contemplated the 'mighty rolling tide of being'. Nor does it reveal the spiritual warmth that kindled the great Biblical expositions of the indwelling God in the human soul.

Similarly, with regard to the Divine indwelling in man,

[1] F. R. Tennant's *Philosophical Theology*, 2 vols., Cambridge, 1928–30, and Inge's *God and the Astronomers*, London, 1933.

[2] Tennant, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 210. [3] Op. cit., p. 155. [4] Op. cit., p. 212.

[5] Op. cit., p. 217. [6] Op. cit., p. 212. [7] Op. cit., p. 213.

Tennant is primarily negative. He is emphatic that it is neither 'possession', nor 'afflatus',[1] nor 'inspiration',[2] nor 'grace conceived as a quasi-physical, non-moral, or impersonal force'.[3] At the same time, he maintains that it must be *less than* 'an innate Divine Light', or 'the Voice of God' within us, or 'prevenient grace', because those would 'invade man's personality'.[4] As for the apparent 'inrushes of creative activity' which have been regarded by many as witnessing to a latent indwelling Something that is more than Nature;—these (he thinks) can 'be accounted for in terms of unaided evolution from that which is due to the transcendent activity of God'.[5] What then is left? As Dr Tennant himself admits, little of any real value:

> Divine immanence in man, in any form in which it must invade and impersonally influence man's personality, is a doctrine which ethical theism cannot countenance: immanence in human subjects, in any other form or of any other kind, perhaps no theologian is concerned to maintain.[6]

He thus practically rules out all Divine indwelling in man, maintains that Divine immanence in Nature is a purely abstract conception, and removes the doctrine of the Incarnation in Christ from the realm of historical and scientific criticism.[7]

In his outlook upon history, Tennant strikes the note of pessimism which is characteristic of post-War disillusionment:

> The groping of the race after God, for the most part misdirected and ineffectual, scarcely bespokes the co-operation of a Light enlightening every man. . . or any guidance of man's native faculties.[8]

On the basis of such a view, God (if He exists at all) can only be a transcendent, not an indwelling God.

Dr Tennant's austere intellectualism may not be wholly congenial to all his readers; but at least, all will recognize that his masterly exposition of philosophy offers weighty support to the modern theological reaction against Immanentism.

### '*God and the Astronomers*'

Further support is given to the same reaction by Dean Inge in his recent study of present-day scientific tendencies, under

[1] p. 220. [2] p. 225. [3] p. 222. [4] p. 221. [5] p. 222.
[6] p. 223. [7] See below, pp. 234 ff. [8] p. 223.

the above title. In this, he deals at length with the 'Law of Entropy', as propounded by modern scientists; in other words, the inevitable 'running down' of the Machine of the Universe, so that eventually all life will become impossible. He quotes Eddington as declaring this to be 'the most certain truth of Science';[1] and on the basis of this, he holds that it is vital for Religion to maintain the transcendence of God above the world, and to refuse to assent to the idea of a God who is simply the Soul of the World. Such a God, 'to whom the world is as necessary as He is to the world', would be 'a God under sentence of death, at however distant a date'.[2] Inge concludes therefore that 'the Universal Soul is not incarnate in the world, which it directs without being involved in it'.[3] He maintains further that the 'Great Tradition' (of Platonic-Aristotelian-Christian thought) is antagonistic to the view that God is 'organic with His creation'.[4] Nor does he encourage us to follow the Historical Idealists in viewing human history as a 'path of God'; for although he is less gloomy than Dr Tennant, and admits that 'a dispassionate survey of the course of history gives ground for a reasonable and tempered hopefulness for the future',[5] he contends that 'the purposes of God in history are finite, local, temporal, and for the most part, individual';[6] and he concludes that in the light of modern Science, a thorough-going Immanentism is fatal to the higher values of Religion.

## C. The Reaction from the Side of Catholic Dogma

### *The Beginnings of the Reaction*

Catholic theologians have never been altogether happy in the atmosphere of 'the Wider Immanence'. Even those of them who assisted to some extent in the revival of Immanentism in the pre-War period generally mingled with their proclamation of the new Gospel some notes of warning and danger. For instance, Illingworth, to whom we owe one of the most careful studies of the Doctrine of Divine Immanence, yet laid his primary emphasis

[1] Inge, op., cit. p. 8. [2] p. vii; cf. p. 10. [3] p. 268. [4] p. 101.
[5] p. 165. [6] p. 172.

on the Divine Transcendence: 'God is our infinite and absolute Other; He is all that we are not.'[1]

Similarly, Baron von Hügel, a Roman Catholic scholar with a wide knowledge of (and a deep sympathy with) the mystical aspect of Christianity, writing in the days before the War, had expressed his misgivings lest the revival of Immanentism should obscure the objective reality of God and the moral issues of life:

> In proportion as we insist upon God's Immanence within the sensible and the human world, in the same proportion does the problem of Evil increase in urgency and difficulty.[2]

Or again:

> Only the experience and the conviction of an objective Reality distinct from, and more than, man, or indeed than the whole of the world apprehended by man as less than or equal to himself, can furnish sufficiently deep and tenacious roots for our sense and need of an objective supreme Beauty, Truth, and Goodness.[3]

These misgivings were not confined to thinkers of the 'Catholic' type, but were shared by many Protestant theologians, who feared the ever-present danger of Pantheism in all tendencies towards the Wider Immanentism.[4]

Such notes of warning began to be heard even in the days when the Revival of Immanentism within the Church was at its height. Since the War, these warnings have gathered strength and definiteness; especially in the ranks of a group of Anglican theologians, some of whom were in their earlier days associated with 'the Gospel of Immanentism', but have now felt the need for a change of emphasis. Indeed, of late, a vigorous counter-attack against Immanentism has become one of the outstanding features of English theological thought. Bishop Gore, writing

[1] *Divine Transcendence*, p. 16 (or p. 7 of the Popular Edition). Cf. above, p. 204.

[2] *Eternal Life*, Edinburgh, 1912, p. 287.

[3] From an address delivered in 1916, and reprinted in his *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, 1st series, London, 1921.

[4] See, e.g., W. N. Clarke's *Christian Doctrine of God*, Edinburgh, 1909, which, in spite of a large measure of sympathy with Immanentism, concludes that Christianity rests ultimately upon a Dualism between God and His creation: 'God is one; and the Universe is another' (p. 273).

in 1923, in his Preface to Fr W. H. G. Holmes's *The Presence of God*, says that 'the main theological controversy of today is the controversy concerning the transcendence and immanence of God', and makes it clear that he, and many others of the Catholic school of thought, regard the issue at stake as vital for the maintenance of the Faith. Among notable books illustrating this tendency, we may mention:

1. Bishop C. Gore's 'trilogy':—*Belief in God*, London, 1921; *Belief in Christ*, 1922; *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, 1924; and his *Can We Then Believe?*, 1926.
2. Archbishop W. Temple's *Christus Veritas*, London, 1925, in which it is evident that he is here laying more stress upon the traditional and transcendental elements in the Doctrine of God than was the case when he contributed to *Foundations*, in 1912.
3. S. F. Davenport's *Immanence and Incarnation*, Cambridge, 1925. An important work by a young Cambridge scholar.
4. Fr W. H. G. Holmes's *The Presence of God*, London, 1923. Of special interest because written in India, with the background of Hindu Immanentism in the writer's mind.
5. *Dogma*, edited by W. R. Matthews, London, 1929. A series of essays by Anglican writers.
6. O. C. Quick's *The Christian Sacraments*, London, 1927. A careful study, from the point of view of moderate Anglo-Catholicism.
7. F. R. Tennant's *Philosophical Theology*,[1] 2 vols., 1928–1930.

Behind the arguments of the majority of these theologians lies a fundamental axiom, not always explicit, but essentially determining their line of thought. This axiom is described by one of its ablest exponents as 'the belief in the Holy Spirit as guiding the process of dogmatic evolution [in the Church] specifically and in detail, not vaguely and in a general sense; resting upon an intuition, analogous to the sense of God in Nature which comes fleetingly at times to all, and is possessed in fullest measure by the favoured few, poets, prophets and mystics.'[2]

Now an 'intuition' of this kind lies outside the range of intellectual proof or disproof; but those who hold it use it instinctively as a basis on which to build far-reaching conclusions.

[1] Already referred to above on pp. 227–8.

[2] N. P. Williams in *Form and Content in the Christian Tradition*, London, 1916, p. 38.

For instance, if we are convinced by 'intuition' that the doctrinal statements of the Creeds, and other pronouncements of the Church, have been guided in detail by the Holy Spirit, it follows that these belong to a sphere of special Divine Revelation, infallible, and true for all time;[1] quite distinct therefore from all statements of merely human knowledge. Our conception of God must then be built primarily upon this Revelation; and in fact, it is mainly upon this that Anglo-Catholic theologians are basing their attack upon 'the Wider Immanentism', and laying down their main principles.

*The Main Principles of Catholic Theology*

(*a*) *The Transcendence of God is the primary truth of the Christian Revelation, because it holds the central place in the Creeds, and in the Bible*

'The first duty of the Church', says Archbishop William Temple, 'is to maintain the Transcendence of God.'[2] 'Transcendence', says Fr Holmes, 'is a matter of Divine Revelation.'[3]

Such statements are indeed fair deductions from the doctrine of the infallibility of the Creeds; for the Creeds tell us that God is 'Maker of all things', and that His Son was 'begotten before all worlds'. These phrases clearly imply the Divine Transcendence; and the Creeds contain no corresponding phrases which affirm the Divine Immanence. A Christianity that is built primarily upon the historic creeds must therefore be primarily Transcendentalist, rather than Immanentist.

(*b*) *Creation is 'ex nihilo'; and God is not 'organic to the world.'*

Catholic theology, as we have seen, came to regard the doctrine of 'creation *ex nihilo*' as of the essence of the Faith;[4] and from this it followed naturally that 'the Divine Nature is absolutely distinct and separate from all created existence',[5] not

[1] E. g., Gore speaks of the Chalcedonian definition of the Two Natures in Christ as 'the final definition of the Church'. (*Belief in Christ*, p. 216.)

[2] *Christus Veritas*, p. 164.

[3] *The Presence of God*, p. 45.

[4] See above, pp. 130, 145.

[5] Holmes, op. cit., p. 9.

merely in degree and quality, but in the essential difference between Creator and creature. Consequently, God cannot be regarded as 'organic to the world', in the sense that the Cairds or Pringle-Pattison taught. There is no 'reciprocal interdependence' between God and the world; God can exist without the world, though the world cannot exist without Him.[1]

> God, in Christian Theism, is Absolute Sovereign; He is not dependent on His Creation, and is complete without it. . . . He is not a growing or developing being. . . . A Christian philosophy rejects all emanation theories in favour of the Doctrine of 'creation out of nothing'.[2]

Dr Tennant similarly defends the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, as safeguarding the idea of an *act of will* in creation, which (he says) is 'indispensable to Theism'.[3] Thus the whole line of thought which culminates in the idea of the Universe as 'the Body of God', or of God as the 'Vital Energy' of the World, is decisively set aside in favour of a stronger emphasis on 'the Divine apartness'.[4]

*(c) The Divine Immanence, though true, is a truth which is only of relative importance in the Christian revelation*

'Immanence', says Bishop Gore, 'is secondary or derivative, rather than primary or dominant' in Christianity.[5] Davenport regards the idea of Immanence throughout Nature, graded according to the various stages of evolution, as belonging to the sphere of things intelligible and natural, in which 'Faith has not the same interest as it has in the "revealed truth" of the Incarnation'; for Immanence (he says) leaves God still

[1] *Christus Veritas*, p. 274.

[2] M. Relton in *Dogma*, p. 215.

[3] See Tennant, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 123 f.

[4] Many writers outside the 'Catholic' school have also felt the need for modifying the view that God indwells all parts of Nature. E.g., W. E. Hocking considers that it is difficult to decide 'what parts of Nature can be regarded as the body of spirit, and what parts only as *environment*'; and concludes that Nature is *largely* environment and *very little* 'body of mind.'—*The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, pp. 211-12, 300–17, etc.

[5] *Can We Then Believe?*, p. 17.

separated from us, in regard to His Person.[1] On this basis, the Doctrine of Divine Immanence is of relatively little importance for the Christian, and is hardly an essential part of the Gospel.

*(d) The Incarnation of God in Christ is an event belonging to an order of things wholly different from that of Divine Immanence*

On this point, the modern opponents of Immanentism lay great stress, and diverge markedly from many of the earlier Liberal Catholics.[2] But even among those of them who had been contributors to *Lux Mundi* and *Foundations*, an unmistakable change of emphasis had become evident in their more recent writings. Bishop Gore, for instance, writing in 1922, insists that 'the Incarnation of God in humanity is only through Christ', and that 'no other incarnation is possible'.[3] Davenport is even more explicit:

> Immanence, at its highest, can never yield Incarnation.
> Immanence admits of degrees; Incarnation of none.
> The Incarnation was not the maximum revelation of God through humanity; it was an absolute revelation.
> Between unique inspiration and Incarnation lies an unfathomable barrier.
> God was in Christ as a conscious, personal mode of existence, apart from the Father.[4]

Again, Archbishop W. Temple (formerly one of the *Foundations* Group) describes the Incarnation as being, by reason of its freedom from sin, '. . . a breach of an otherwise universal law, as complete as would be a total reversal of the law of gravitation.'[5]

From the side of philosophy, Tennant supports this view that Immanence and Incarnation belong to two different types of operation. 'To introduce Immanence as a method of explaining the mode in which God was in Christ, is' (he says)

[1] Davenport, op. cit., pp. xvii, 58, 110, 136.
[2] See above, pp. 201 ff.
[3] *Belief in Christ*, pp. 182, 215.
[4] Davenport, op. cit., pp. 122, 111, 247, 20, 268; cf. Quick, *The Christian Sacraments*, p. 56.
[5] *Christus Veritas*, p. 217.

'to abandon Incarnation.'[1] He holds that in Incarnation, if the term is to have any distinct meaning, God must be held to become the subject of (*erleben*) the mental states and acts of the Incarnate one; whereas Immanence should signify that God acts inspirationally *on* a human soul which retains its autonomy.[2] He regards the Incarnation, in the above sense, as a truth that is 'above reason',[3] and 'one which history is unable to pronounce either true or false'.[4] By thus removing the Doctrine of the Incarnation from the sphere of the historian into 'the realm of faith', many of its difficulties are taken beyond the reach of historical criticism; but the intimate relation between the Incarnation and the Divine aspect of history as a whole is at the same time weakened.

*(e) The 'gift of the Spirit' and the special Presence of God bestowed through the Church and its ordinances is different in kind from the other gifts of God to mankind at large*

Says Bishop Gore:

> In the New Testament there is scarcely a hint to be found of a universal gift of the Spirit of God to men because they are men. There is suggested a universal presence of the Divine Light; . . . but the Spirit, who makes the light effectual, is represented as given only through the Risen Christ to those who believe in Him.[5]

This clearly separates the gift of the Spirit from all kinds of 'natural' Divine indwelling. Similarly, Fr Holmes, after rejecting all idea of a 'natural' immanence of the Deity in the world or in human nature as such, admits only

> . . . three modes of the Presence in the New way [of Christ]: it has been attached to the Church; it has been attached to the Blessed Sacrament, in which He may be touched, embraced, and received; it has been attached to new-created souls, in which He makes His mystical indwelling.[6]

This practically limits the Presence of God to the ordinances of the Church: or at least relegates all other modes of the Presence to a level of comparatively small religious value.

[1] Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 235.
[2] Op. cit., p. 236.
[3] Op. cit., p. 232.
[4] Op. cit., p. 238.
[5] *Belief in Christ*, p. 179 f.
[6] *The Presence of God*, pp. 53 f.

It will be noticed that the Catholic Reaction against Immanentism has been dealing with the same issues as those which the advocates of Christian Immanentism had discussed, a generation before; but in almost every case, the earlier judgement is directly reversed. The emphasis is now shifted back to those aspects of doctrine from which the Immanentists sought to dislodge it; and the traditional lines of demarcation, which the Immanentists pronounced to be artificial and unreal, are in most cases re-affirmed, as of Divine authority. It is evident that two groups of men, each of undoubted intellectual ability and unquestionable honesty of thought, can reach diametrically opposite conclusions upon the issues in question. This is because they start from opposite 'axioms' with regard to such matters as the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit upon the Church, and the 'absolute' nature of the Incarnation. Most of the Catholic theologians, frankly admitting that their convictions in these matters rest upon 'intuition' or 'faith', are content, when they reach the sphere of faith, to cease reasoning, and simply to affirm their convictions. Meanwhile, their opponents, not sharing these axioms, and approaching the problem by methods such as would be applied to scientific or historical investigation, naturally find themselves led to widely different conclusions.

## D. The Barthian Reaction against Immanentism

Even more drastic than the Anglo-Catholic reaction against Immanentism is the movement led by Karl Barth on the Continent of Europe, the influence of which has now been felt throughout the Western world, and has brought new vigour into large areas of Christendom which seemed to be spiritually well-nigh dead.

### *The Literature of the Movement*

Barth belongs essentially to the post-War period; he sprang into fame with his Commentary on Romans in 1918, and since then has been a prolific writer. His line of thought is typically German, and can be fully understood only through the medium

of the German language; but a number of his books are now available in English translations.[1]

Among books by Barth's disciples, several by Emil Brunner have been translated into English, of which *The Theology of Crisis* (London, 1929), and *The Word and the World* (1931), are among the best known. These present the Barthian theology in a form perhaps more easily intelligible to the Anglo-Saxon mind than the language of Barth himself.[2] Books by English writers on the subject of the Barthian theology are now numerous. Among these may be mentioned especially:

1. *The Teaching of Karl Barth.* R. Birch Hoyle, London, 1930.
2. *The Significance of Karl Barth.* J. MacConnachie, London, 1931.
3. *The Barthian Theology and the Man of Today.* J. MacConnachie, London, 1933.
4. *Our Concern with the Theology of Crisis.* W. Lowrie, New York, 1933.
5. *Karl Barth, Prophet of a New Christianity.* W. Pauck, New York, 1933.

As far back as 1927, observers of the trends of thought on the continent of Europe noted that the 'Theology of Crisis' was spreading like wild-fire:[3] and about the same time, Keyserling predicted that 'the future of Protestantism lies with this group.'[4] Whether this proves to be so or not, at least it is

[1] 1. *The Word of God and the Word of Man* (trans. by Douglas Horton, London, 1928), of Barth's *Wort Gottes und Theologie*, 1923.

2. *The Epistle to the Romans* (trans. by Sir E. C. Hoskyns, Oxford, 1933).

3. *The Resurrection of the Dead* (trans. by H. J. Stenning, London, 1933).

4. *Theological Existence Today* (the Nazi Revolution and the Church in Germany). (Trans. by R. Birch Hoyle, London, 1933).

5. *Come, Holy Spirit!* (sermons by K. Barth and E. Thurneysen, Edinburgh, 1934). Many of Barth's greatest writings, however, are still (1937) available only in German; e.g.,

1. *Die Theologie und die Kirche*, 1928.
2. *Prolegomena zur christlichen Dogmatik*, 1927.
3. *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, 1932.
4. Also a number of articles in Barth's magazine, *Zwischen den Zeiten* ('Between the Times').

[2] Barth, in his preface to Sir E. Hoskyns' translation of his *Epistle to the Romans*, shows himself aware of this, but appeals to English readers 'not to look at me simply through the spectacles of Emil Brunner' (p. vii).

[3] See *Protestant Europe*, by Keller and Stewart, 1927, pp. 9, 147.

[4] Quoted by Douglas Horton in his preface to *The Word of God and the Word of Man.*

certain that Karl Barth has become the most prominent figure in the theological world of today; and the issues which he has raised form the centre of modern theological interest and controversy.

*The Note of Post-War Pessimism*

Barth's teaching bears at every point the impress of the chaos and disillusionment which followed the Great War in Central Europe. From the German-Swiss viewpoint, it then seemed that civilization had broken down, and that current Christianity had no message of salvation to give to a lost world. To the Barthian School today, 'things as they are' present a picture of unrelieved darkness. God is not to be found in Nature; for Nature is entirely separated from God by the doctrines of creation *ex nihilo*, and of 'discontinuity' between God and the world, 'which is basic to every primary doctrine of Christianity'.[1] Nor is He to be discerned in History; for 'in History itself, there is nothing, so far as the eye can reach, that can ground faith',[2] and 'Biblical Christianity denies most vehemently any optimistic outlook upon the historical process as such'.[3] Least of all can God be found in the heart of man:

> The fundamental conviction of Barth is, that there is no direct continuity between the creature and the Creator; and that the idea of organic relation between God and man is the very fountain of error. . . . The Catholic doctrine of *analogia entis* (likeness between creature and Creator) is 'the discovery of Anti-Christ'.[4]

> This line of separation between God and the world naturally applies to man also. It implies a vehement denial of a divine depth or height in man where communion with God may be effected or man may in some way find salvation.[5]

The Barthian thus pronounces the world as it is to be 'without God, and without hope'. Nor does he see any ray of light in the Church as it is, or in any of its existing schools of thought. In Fundamentalism (says Brunner) true Christianity

[1] See Brunner, *The Theology of Crisis*, p. 12; cf. Barth, *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, p. 71.

[2] *Christliche Dogmatik*, p. 239. [3] Brunner, *Theology of Crisis*, p. 112.

[4] MacConnachie, *The Barthian Theology*, pp. 49, 69.

[5] Brunner, op. cit., p. 12.

has been 'petrified,' and has lost its savour; while in Modernism it has been 'dissolved', and has ceased to have any distinctive message for the world.[1]

In this profound pessimism with regard to 'things as they are', the unprejudiced observer can hardly fail to detect the effect of the depressing situation in post-War Europe, in the midst of which Barth and his followers have been living. Barth himself, however, maintains that this situation represents the real significance of life; and that pre-War optimism was moving in an imaginary world of dreams. The sickness of the world and of human nature is (he holds) permanent and fatal; and the only hope of salvation lies in a fresh recognition of this truth.

*The Word of God*

But Barth, like all prophetic souls, does not rest merely in his denunciations; he uses those as a foil to throw into stronger relief his message of hope. For he *is* a Messenger of Hope; he claims to have found salvation—or rather, to have been found and saved by God. If asked 'How?' he answers, '*By the Word of God*'. If we ask again, 'What is this "Word", and how does it come to us?' the Barthian answer is not easy to understand. It is marked by a thorough-going, relentless logic, which rejects all 'relative' judgements as valueless. It insists on presenting every issue as a sharp alternative, 'Either-Or' (*Entweder-Oder*); and when the choice has been made, the argument presses on to its logical conclusion, heedless of other aspects of truth, and glorying in paradox and extravagance. But it is important to understand, as far as we can, Barth's conception of 'the Word of God'; for this is central in his theology, and in his attack upon Christian Immanentism.

*The Channels of the Word of God*

In answer to the question, 'Where is the Word of God to be found, and how does it come to us?' Barth replies: (i) In the Bible; (ii) in Jesus Christ;—*and nowhere else.*

> The Reformed Churches saw that Truth is contained only in the Word of God, and that the Word of God for them lay only in the Old and New Testaments.[2]

[1] Brunner, op. cit., p. 14.

[2] *The Word of God*, p. 240.

> If we seek for God's Word somewhere else than in Jesus Christ, and seek Christ elsewhere than in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, we become as those who do not seek for God at all.[1]

This does not mean that the Barthians hold the Fundamentalist doctrine of the plenary inspiration or infallibility of the Bible. Brunner says:

> He who identifies the letters and words of the Scriptures with the Word of God, has never truly understood the Word of God.[2]

And he quotes with approval Martin Luther's saying: 'The Scriptures are the cradle in which Christ is laid.' Nor does the Barthian view involve the rejection of modern scientific theories of the Universe, as being *untrue*; it only maintains that they are *irrelevant* for the Gospel, and do not help us in any way to know God.[3] That knowledge can come only through the Bible, and through Jesus Christ in the Bible.

It is not easy to understand *how* Barth relates the Word of God in the Bible to the Word of God in Jesus Christ. For on the one hand, while he refuses to regard all the details in the Bible as divinely authorized, he certainly seems to ascribe to the Bible *as a whole* a divine quality which separates it from all other literature,[4] and makes it, as a whole, the only channel of God's Word to man. Yet at the same time, within that 'whole' Barth singles out Jesus Christ as 'the Word of God', unique and apart from all else. Not, indeed the historic figure of Jesus Christ; for that (he says) is merely a human figure, if studied historically, and does not bring to us any 'Word' from God:

> Within history, Jesus as the Christ can be understood only as Problem or Myth. . . . The Resurrection is the declaration of the Son of Man to be the Son of God; . . . and apart from this, Jesus has no more significance or insignificance than may be attached to any man or thing or period of history in itself.[5]

[1] *Theological Existence Today*, p. 15. [2] *The Theology of Crisis*, p. 19.

[3] 'It is quite as possible to be a Biblical Christian with the new world-view of Darwin, Einstein and Planck, as it was to be religious with the Babylonian three-storeyed universe.' Brunner, *The Word and the World*, p. 126.

[4] Cf. W. A. Visser't Hooft, *None Other Gods*, London, 1937, p. 70: 'Once we have found what the Bible-as-a-whole has to say on any given point, then it is just "truth" for us.' [5] *The Epistle to the Romans*, English trans., p. 30.

Brunner takes the same view:

> The historical Jesus is a corpse, a scientific abstraction, which is of no value to us.[1]

To some readers, it may seem that this idea of a Divine Word or Message to man, coming through Jesus Christ, and yet not through the historic Jesus studied historically, is out of touch with reality. But there is no mistaking the intense reality of the conception to Barth's own mind. To him, there has come, through the Bible, and through Christ, something new—a Word from God, 'intersecting vertically' the plane of human life,[2] and breaking across his normal experience, as something entirely 'other', which has brought him peace, and joy and hope. No further explanation is offered; nor does Barth seem anxious to make himself intelligible to those who have not shared in his own experience of 'the Word of God'.

*The Content of the Word of God*

If it is not easy to understand how Barth conceives the Word to come to us, it is still more difficult to grasp his conception of what 'the Word' is; in other words, what is the *content* of its Divine Message. In explaining what it is *not*, he and his followers are clear and explicit. It is *not* to be found in Nature, nor in History, nor in the religious experience of mankind; nor even in the historic figure of Jesus of Nazareth. For although we are told that 'the Word' does indeed come to us through Jesus Christ, if we then proceed to ask, What *is* 'Jesus Christ' in the Barthian theology? we are again met by an answer that is primarily negative:

> Jesus Christ is *not* the keystone in the arch of our thinking;
> — *not* a supernatural miracle, which we may or may not accept;
> — *not* a goal which we may hope to reach;
> — *not* a figure of history, to which we may or may not relate ourselves;
> — *least of all*, an object of our religious mystical experience;
> So far as He is *this*, He is not Jesus Christ!
> He is God who becomes man, the creator of all things![3]

[1] Brunner, *The Word and the World*, p. 88.
[2] *The Epistle to the Romans*, English trans., p. 30.
[3] Barth, *The Word of God*, p. 181.

Does this leave us with any intelligible content for 'the Word'? Barth does not even seem to desire that it should do so. To him, God is indescribable; and it is inevitable that the Word from an indescribable God should be similarly indescribable. The utmost that Barth will allow himself to say of God is in terms of 'Otherness' and 'Distinction':

> The Divine is something Whole and complete in Itself; a kind of new and different Something, in contrast to the world.[1]
>
> God, who is distinguished qualitatively from men and from everything human, and must never be identified with anything which we name, or experience, or conceive, or worship, as God; . . . God, the 'Yes' in our 'No' and the 'No' in our 'Yes', the First and the Last, and, consequently, the Unknown; God, the Lord, the Creator, the Redeemer;—this is the Living God![2]

In such language, we seem to hear the echoes of Śaṅkara's *Neti, Neti!* springing indeed from a deep reverence for the Divine, which refuses to sanction any utterance, or even intelligent thought, with regard to it, but offering no concession to any one who desires to worship the Lord with all his *mind*, and to understand as well as to adore. Yet no one can study Barth without realizing that for him, the Word of God, the indescribable, is not 'an empty void'. Rather, it is something so full of value that it gives new meaning and value to all things, when once it has been received by the Christian soul. For then indeed, Jesus Christ (who, viewed historically, remains only 'the Great Incognito'),[3] becomes, in the light of the Word of God, 'the Eternal Contemporary' of us all.[4] Similarly, the Incarnation of the 'Wholly Other' God in man (which from the point of view of human philosophy, is 'an absurd logical, ethical and religious impossibility'),[5] becomes the central truth of the Word of God.[6] So the Word of God brings to us a new interpretation of everything that it touches.

[1] *The Word of God*, p. 277.
*The Epistle to the Romans*, English trans., pp. 330 f.
[3] Birch Hoyle, *The Teaching of Karl Barth*, p. 171.
[4] MacConnachie, *The Barthian Theology*, p. 64.
[5] Barth, *Christliche Dogmatik*, p. 261; quoted in Birch Hoyle, op. cit., p. 155.
[6] Barth, *The Word of God*, p. 181.

*The Barthian Attack upon Christian Immanentism*

If God is 'the Wholly Other' (*Totaliter Aliter*) in relation to everything that exists,[1] all thought of God's indwelling in Nature or in man would seem to be ruled out *a priori* as absurd. So it is not surprising that Barth's first onslaughts fell with special severity on 'immanentist' theologians such as Schleiermacher, Troeltsch, and Otto, who had emphasized the indwelling God as the heart of true Religion.[2]

Brunner is even more uncompromising in his denunciations of Immanentism:

> This so-called Realism and Idealism, as well as mystical religion, are intrinsically the same thing. They are a religion of Immanence. . . . An impersonal God and an impersonal man are the necessary consequences of a religion of Immanence.[3]

The Kingdom of God in the New Testament is exclusively eschatological, transcendental, and anti-evolutionary; and hence 'for Christianity the conflict with modern thinking,' which is 'as irreconcilably opposed to that found in the Bible and in Christian teaching as were the Baals . . . to the God of Israel,' is a fight for very existence.[4]

This violent antagonism to the idea of Divine Indwelling seems to be a natural corollary from the extreme Transcendentalism of the Barthian theology, with its rigid Dualism separating God from all His creation. Yet here again, the Barthians insist that although the natural man can never find God in Nature or in himself, the true Christian, when he has received the Word of God, can thereby discern God in the world where before He was hidden. So although the Divine Immanence is rejected as a 'truth of Nature', something akin to it is brought back as a 'truth of Revelation':

> Thus the Divine radiance shines out even over the nature of men; and the world, too, filled with indescribable hope, is stretched out before the new men standing on the threshold of the new world.[5]

[1] Barth, *The Word of God*, p. 75, etc. Cf. MacConnachie, *The Significance of Karl Barth*, p. 220. [2] Birch Hoyle, op. cit., pp. 29, 64, 115, etc.

[3] Brunner, *The Theology of Crisis*, pp. 28, 31.

[4] Brunner, *The Word and the World*, p. 5; cf. p. 108.

[5] Barth, *Epistle to the Romans*, English trans., p. 178.

And, commenting on Romans iii, 31 ('Do we then make the Law of none effect through faith? Nay, we establish the Law'), he writes:

> It is we who proclaim God as Lord of heaven and earth, by naming Him the unknown God; we who recognize the work of the Creator in the creation, by preaching redemption. . . . In the veritable transcendence of the judgment and righteousness of God lies His most genuine immanence.[1]

Brunner is indeed quite indignant with 'the nonsense talked about the "Barthian Theology" having perception only for the transcendence of God, not for his Immanence'.[2]

So we need to be careful lest we misunderstand the Barthians in their attitude to Divine Immanence. Yet is their explanation satisfying? If, indeed, in their denial of any possibility of discovering God as Indweller by 'natural' methods, they only wish to insist that for the knowledge of God, something more than intellectual cleverness is needed—this would be in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament, that only the pure in heart can see God; and it would command the general assent of Christian folk. But the Barthians certainly seem to go much further than this, and to deny that any real knowledge of God as Indweller is possible, even for the most pious Christians, by the methods of scientific study and observation, or through the medium of religious and mystical experience. Such a denial challenges the conviction of countless devout souls, that by these channels God has spoken to them, and they have thereby come to learn more of Him.

The Barthian attack upon Christian Immanentism has far-reaching implications, not only for theology, but also for practical life and action. For the Christian Immanentism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with its vision of an indwelling God working His purposes out through all life and history, brought a real inspiration to active, beneficent service, assuring men that they are 'fellow-workers with God' in the building-up of His Kingdom on earth, and sharers in the mighty Divine Purpose for the world. But Barth sweeps away

[1] *Epistle to the Romans*, English trans., p. 116.
[2] *The Word and the World*, p. 7.

all this. He denies that there will ever be a Kingdom of God on this earth; nor will He allow us to dignify our efforts to help our fellow-men by saying that 'the service of man is the service of God'; for this (he says) is 'merely a clever paradox'.[1]

We may not even regard our human love as a reflection of the Love that is in God; for we are told that natural love has no connexion with the 'non-sentimental, eschatological love' of the New Testament. This teaching of the 'discontinuity' between the Love of God and the love of man will appear to many Christians to be one of the most dangerous elements in the Barthian theology; and one moreover which is wholly alien to the teaching of Jesus Christ, who constantly used parables and similes drawn from human life and human love to convey His thought of the Divine. But to Brunner, the human love of Jesus is of little value:

> Even if Jesus manifests this idea [the moral idea, love] in the most perfect way, he has nothing to say to us which we do not know ourselves.[2]

Such teaching cuts away the very foundations of the moral sanctions which Christian Immanentism has endorsed by its vision of the Love of God reflected in and through the love of man, and its call to the service of man as an integral part of the service of God. Little wonder if the Barthian theology seems to offer a welcome excuse to the many who seek to evade the challenge of the Social Problem to the Christian conscience.

Yet it must be recognized that Barth himself is careful to guard against the danger of 'antinomianism' in his teaching. (Indeed, perhaps that teaching is not more 'dangerous' than the doctrine of Justification by Faith as preached by St. Paul?) Barth firmly maintains that the Christian is still under strict obligation to engage in service to his fellow-men, because God has so commanded him. It is true that all our work on this earth is only 'play'; but it is 'significant play'.[3] Although Barth (himself an ex-socialist) no longer holds his early faith in the

[1] *The Word of God*, p. 276. The whole of Chapter viii ('The Christian's Place in Society') is concerned with this subject.

[2] *The Word and the World*, p. 40.

[3] Such language reminds us of the Hindu conception of the activity of the phenomenal world as God's *Līla* (play).

value of Social Service, he has not lost the note of earnestness, sympathy and obligation in his attitude towards humanity at large.

> Today there is a call for large-hearted, far-sighted, characterful conduct towards democracy;—no, not *towards* it as irresponsible onlookers and outsiders; but *within* it, as hope-sharing and guilt-sharing comrades.[1]

That is finely said; and one of the younger Barthians has put still more clearly the attitude of his school towards the call to service:

> Those who have met the Living God, and know what sin is, cannot participate in the general enthusiasm for the betterment of the world, or for the 'Christianizing' of the various realms of life; because they see the inefficacy of all human efforts which are not based on a more radical view of human existence. Will they then do nothing? No, not at all. . . . They will work night and day, wherever God has placed them. But they will work differently. They will not be haunted by illusions as to their results, nor discouraged by the lack of them. They will carry on, because their work is a matter of personal obedience to a personal God.[2]

It would certainly not be fair to say that such an attitude is heedless of the call to Social Service; but time alone will show whether this doctrine of Work as Obligation to God, without thought of results,[3] will prove to be as potent an inspiration in the hearts of men as the motive of co-operation with God in the working out of His purpose in the world.

*The Future of Barthianism*

What is likely to be the future of this strange, powerful movement of our day? It certainly brings a challenge that is not to be lightly ignored. It has pointed out the shallowness of much that has passed muster as 'Liberal Christianity' in recent years; the inadequacy of the idea of Progress to explain the

[1] *The Word of God*, p. 319.

[2] W. A. Visser't Hooft, *An Introduction to the Study of Karl Barth*; privately printed, 1933.

[3] Cf. the Hindu conception of *Nishkāma Karma* (work free from desire), which is perhaps one of the most valuable contributions of Hinduism to the ideals of mankind. (See E. W. Hopkins, *The Ethics of India*, p. 189.)

tragedies of the twentieth century; the need for a more serious estimate of human sin. It has recalled us to the eternal truth of the Divine Transcendence, and has bidden us remember that 'fear of the Lord' which Liberalism and Immanentism have sometimes tended to forget.

The perplexity, and even antagonism, which Barth's methods of argument arouse almost instinctively in the mind of the average English reader, are partly due to the contact between two types of mentality, neither of which is familiar with the methods of the other; and partly to the difficulty of understanding the finer shades of meaning in technical theological terms, when translated from one language into another. A more careful study of the real meanings lying behind such terms, both in German and in English, may help to reconcile many apparent contradictions.

Yet, with every desire for real and sympathetic understanding, the present writer finds it difficult to expect, or to wish, that the Barthian theology should be accepted in its entirety by Christendom at large. Its Tertullian-like refusal to allow anyone who does not accept its doctrines to pronounce any judgement upon them[1] is a fairly sure indication of an irrational and irresponsible dogmatism. Its vehement denials are so polemical and controversial that they seem to close the door against other aspects of truth. It professes to be Realist; but it pays no attention to those aspects of Reality which do not fit in with its own theory, and makes no efforts to appreciate those wide fields of human experience which lie beyond the frontier of Western Christendom.[2] It claims to be Scriptural; but it selects from Scripture only those texts which support its own doctrines, and quietly ignores the rest. In forbidding men to find God revealed in History, it refuses to accept one of the great principles that lie at the heart of the Old Testament; and by denying any essential kinship between God the Father and man His child, it violates one of the most sacred truths taught

[1] 'An outsider's question can never be answered unless he ceases to be an outsider.' Brunner, *The Theology of Crisis*, p. 37.

[2] Barth's thinly-veiled dislike of the negro and the Slav (*The Word of God*, p. 144) and Brunner's open contempt for Indian thought (*The Word and the World*, p. 31) are instances of this.

by our Lord Himself in the New. In place of the figure of the historic Jesus in the Gospels, it offers us a colourless 'Incognito'; and of its doctrine of the Holy Spirit, even a sympathetic critic has said that it presents Him as 'Discomforter' rather than as Comforter.[1] While rejecting the traditional Dualisms of Catholicism and Evangelicalism, which separated 'the world' from the Church or from the Bible, it has erected another Dualism, no less rigid and artificial, between 'the Word of God' and all the rest of human experience. While professing to abjure all 'subjectivism', it will allow no evidence for this new Dualism, except the affirmation of a group of theologians that God has objectively confronted *them*;—and what is this affirmation but the judgement of *their* minds upon the significance of something which they have experienced?[2] They vehemently repudiate 'Relativism'; but even in so doing, they are using their own relative minds to command their own theory to other relative minds.

It may be that the verdict of history will give Barth a place among the prophets who have reclaimed forgotten truths from oblivion. But if those truths are to be held according to the proportions of the Faith as it is in Jesus, they will need to be harmonized with truths that Barth has ignored or denied. Christendom cannot afford to relinquish the richness of a faith that has learnt to feel God in Nature, to watch His purpose in History, and to know Him as the Indweller in the hearts of His children. Barthianism, like Jewish Apocalyptic, is 'a Religion for bad times'. But the present times, though bad for many, are probably not worse than many times that have come and gone in past ages. The course of evolution is not a steady upward flow, but a tide which prevails slowly, while many waves swing up and down the beach. We cannot indeed revert to the easy optimism of those of our Victorian forefathers who supposed that evolution by itself would bring in the Kingdom of God. But in the parables of Our Lord, the principle of gradual growth plays a part in God's plan, as well as the sudden 'inbreaking' of

[1] Birch Hoyle, op. cit., p. 260.

[2] 'How do we know that God says so?' writes Brunner. 'Because this objective Word of God is corroborated subjectively.' *The Word and the World*, p. 66.

the harvest; and His teaching warns us not to deny God either as Indweller or as Sovereign.

For the moment, however, the major trends of thought in English Christianity seem to be away from Immanentism, and away from the Liberalism with which it has so often been associated. Barthianism is commanding increasing attention among scholars; and traditional types of theology, both Catholic and Evangelical, which put forward uncompromising claims to possess final truth, in Church or Bible, and lay strong emphasis on the distinctive, supernatural quality of the Christian Gospel, seem to be prevailing—not least among the younger generation within the Church.

In other English-speaking countries, too, similar tendencies are apparent. In both Anglican and Free Church circles, there is a leaning towards Catholicism; certainly in organization, and to some extent also in doctrine.[1]

In the East, Barthianism, though even less known than in England, is making headway, and has already been hailed by some leading Oriental Christians as a welcome alternative to the Liberal Christianity which has been widely current among recent generations of missionaries, and which is too eirenic to satisfy the more militant spirits in the Church.[2]

So it would seem likely that for some time at least, the tide of thought in the Church, both in the West and in the East, will be unfavourable to much further development of Christian Immanentism. Yet, in view of past history, it seems almost certain that it will not altogether cease to exist as a school of Christian thought, and that from time to time it will utter its protest against a one-sided Transcendentalism.

Among English theologians of today, some of the most eminent are anxious to hold the balance between the two extremes, and to safeguard the truth for which Divine Immanence stands, while seeking to express it in terms of 'purpose' rather than of 'substance'. Dr W. R. Matthews offers us a notable example of this 'mediating' tendency in his *God in Christian*

[1] We see this tendency reflected, for instance, in the widespread support given by non-Anglicans as well as Anglicans to the proposed scheme for Reunion in South India on an episcopal basis.

[2] See, e.g., V. Chakkarai's *Jesus the Avatar*, Madras, 1931.

*Thought and Experience*,[1] and we will close our historical survey with a quotation therefrom:

> The general Providence of God is to be found most clearly where the Prophets found it, in the course of history. . . . The emergence of *homo sapiens* from the brutal condition of the anthropoid; . . . the passage from savagery to the ordered life of the city; the slow development of political freedom and ideals of fellowship; are, for the Theist, revelations of the purpose of God.

## Additional Note

Since the above chapter was written, the controversy between the Barthian theology and Immanentism has come into greater prominence, through the claim of the German Faith Movement to be the expression of an 'immanent urge deep in the heart of the German people'. Against this the Christian opponents (both Protestant and Catholic) of the German Faith Movement have been insisting that the Gospel of Christ is based upon a 'revelation', given by a transcendent God; which on the one hand gives it a wider range than a religion which is exclusively German, and at the same time restricts its content by declining to accept everything in 'the urge of the German soul' unless it is in harmony with the standards of Jesus Christ. Among the Christian opponents of this 'New Paganism' of Germany, the Barthian theologians have taken a leading part.[2]

[1] London, 1930, p. 269.

[2] See *Germany's New Religion*—a translation of essays by Wilhelm Hauer (a chief prophet of the German Faith Movement), Karl Heim (Protestant) and Karl Adam (Catholic); London, 1937.

# CHAPTER XIV

## SOME GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Now that we have concluded our survey of the history of the idea of Divine indwelling, it may be well for us to stand back and endeavour to see what are the main conclusions to be drawn from the bewildering mass of details, and what are the problems that still call for further consideration.

Throughout our study, we have found evidence of the twin principles of Growth and Continuity. On the one hand, we have watched the evolution of thought from simple and crude beginnings to more complex and refined conceptions. The naïve materialistic ideas of primitive man, and the crude terms in which he expressed them, have been lifted up to higher levels, or replaced by others more adequate. The issues have been clarified by the reflections of philosophers and saints; yet at the same time the complexity of the whole problem has become more and more evident, as fresh lines of thought have been opened up.

But while we have thus found the principle of Growth everywhere operative, the principle of Continuity has been no less apparent. Not only has the main idea of Divine indwelling presented itself again and again in the human mind; but it has again and again been associated with the same problems, around which the argument has continued to revolve. Such questions as:

> Can God be limited by any space, so as to indwell it?
> Can a good God dwell in evil?
> Is God in the heart of man as 'the Other' or 'the Same'?

—these questions, which were debated ages ago by Rāmānuja, Plato and Augustine, are still being discussed by the most modern philosophers of our day; and sometimes it even seems as if little progress were being made towards their solution. Side by side with growth and progress, we find an inner conservatism of Nature which resists change, and binds together past,

present and future in a continuous unity. Besides this, we have to reckon with the factor of decay, and also with the possibility of the inbreaking of new factors, hitherto unknown in history.

All this constitutes the complex background of the whole process which we have been studying. Yet amid this complexity, there are one or two general conclusions which may be deduced with some confidence.

## A. The Necessity for Some Measure of Immanentism

Our survey has shown us that the idea of Divine indwelling persists or recurs in almost every type of religion, including those which lay their main emphasis upon the Divine transcendence. For instance, in Christianity, although the wider conception of Divine indwelling has generally held only a subordinate place, and there have even been periods when it has been almost lost sight of in the Church, nevertheless, after such periods, it has invariably asserted itself once more. Moreover, this has often been brought about by thinkers and teachers of unquestionable Christian conviction, such as those of the School of Alexandria, the Cambridge Platonists, the Romanticists and Idealists of the nineteenth century; all of whom proclaimed it as a vision which they had found to be of deep spiritual value, and a harmonious enrichment of their Christian faith.

### *The Reasons for the Persistence of Immanentism*

What is the explanation of this recurrent (though often unauthorized) revival of the Wider Immanentism within the Christian Church? Our study has shown us that behind it there lie some elemental instincts of human nature, and a concern for values which are felt to be needed, and which would otherwise be lost. Some of these we may now consider.

### *The Sense of Awe and Wonder*

Most thoughtful souls, when confronted with the world around them, are conscious at times of something more than the things of sense; something awful and wonderful, or (in Otto's phrase) 'numinous'. Sometimes this leads (as we shall see a little later) to the thought of Something beyond and above,

and thus to Transcendentalism. But it also produces the sense of a mysterious Something within—the All-pervading. It may take crude and fearsome forms, as in the practices of magic, and many savage rites; or it may lead to a heightened sense of the beautiful, as in the realm of Art. In its nobler forms it generally leads to a broad and liberal outlook, unwilling to define the 'how' or the 'when' of the Presence which is felt, and suspicious of the definitions and limitations of it which are characteristic of professional theologians. Thus this elemental sense of awe and wonder leads to a recognition of the immanence of God which is at once vague and wide.

*The Mystical Experience of God*

The witness of the mystic is primarily to the God within his own soul; and so it comes nearer to the Christian doctrine of the indwelling Spirit than to wider conceptions of Divine immanence. But in many cases, a note of Nature-Mysticism is also found, side by side with the consciousness of God in the heart. St. Francis of Assisi, and Wordsworth, for instance, combine their sense of God within the soul with a vivid sense of God in Nature. And Masefield, in *The Everlasting Mercy*, depicts Saul Kane, immediately after his sudden conversion, as filled with a new sense of the beauty of Nature all around him, as well as of God within him. Indeed in Mysticism, there is always a certain independence, which makes the mystic in some respects a law unto himself, and unwilling to submit wholly to restrictions laid down by authority.

> Whoso hath felt the Spirit of the Highest
> Cannot confound nor doubt Him nor deny:
> Yea with one voice, O world, tho' thou deniest
> Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.[1]

Mysticism has often been suspected by the orthodox; but it has rarely been exorcised completely, except by Irreligion; and when it has been denounced by religious souls (such as Martin Luther or Karl Barth), something closely akin to it has been generally manifest in its critics, through their strong conviction that they too have 'the Mind of Christ' within them.

[1] F. W. H. Myers, *St. Paul.*

Consequently Mysticism often produces an attitude of mind which is prepared also to find God in the unexplored regions of the world without, as well as in the heart within, and thus tends to favour the Wider Immanentism.

*The intellectual Desire for Completeness and Unity*

The conception of God indwelling the whole world has unquestionably a grandeur and consistency about it which is satisfying to the human mind, and presents us with a unity that is lacking in other views of life. For as long as God stands unrelated to certain parts of His creation, He is, to that extent, a God incomplete; and all Dualisms, however valuable for safeguarding our sense of moral distinctions, leave us unsatisfied intellectually, and still seeking for some principle to unify the whole. The more drastic the Dualism, the more insistent does this problem become; till in the stark Transcendentalism of such teachers as Barth, we are left wondering how and why the world as it is should ever have come into being from a God who is 'altogether Other'. So wherever the intellectual desire for a satisfying, unified view of the world is strongly felt, the tendency to Immanentism re-asserts itself.

*The Desire for a Philosophy which allows Scope for the many Shades of Life's Values*

We have noticed that a thorough-going Pantheism, which affirms that God is equally in all things, is ultimately destructive of all sense of value and morality. But a 'graded Immanentism' allows us to attribute varying degrees of worth to the various things and persons in the world. Now this seems to many to accord with the facts of life far better than a Dualism which divides life simply into two homogeneous realms, 'God' and 'Not God', 'Good' and 'Bad', 'Natural' and 'Supernatural', with sharp, impassable gulfs separating the two in each case. It is true that Christian orthodoxy has, on the whole, authorized such divisions; and some of them are undoubtedly deep-rooted in the teaching of Christ Himself. Nevertheless, the recurring revolt against orthodoxy has derived a large part of its stimulus from the belief that some of these divisions are artificial, and not true

to life. This (as we have seen) was one of the underlying causes of the revival of Immanentism in the nineteenth century. To some extent, therefore, 'the Gospel of Immanentism' springs from an instinctive and rightful desire for an interpretation of life which is true to the facts.

In view of these underlying causes for the periodic revivals of faith in God as the Indweller, we need not regard these revivals as regrettable lapses from orthodoxy, or as merely accidental recurrences; rather we shall recognize that such a faith is, in some form, a necessity for religion, and that any attempt to suppress it is bound to fail; for it stands securely rooted in the laws of the spiritual world.

## B. The Necessity for Some Measure of Transcendentalism

### *The Reasons for its Persistence*

If our survey has impressed us with the persistence of Immanentism, it has impressed us no less with the persistence of the reactions against it, which have recurred with equal regularity; and this suggests that these are likewise based on some elemental needs and primary instincts of human nature. Nor are these far to seek.

### *The Sense of Awe and Wonder*

The very same sense of awe and wonder, which under certain conditions leads men to conceive of the Divine presence as within the world of Nature, may lead others to conceive of it as beyond and outside the world. Indeed, the 'numinous' is perhaps even more readily pictured as 'above' than as 'within':

> As the heavens are higher than the earth,
> So are My ways higher than your ways,
> And My thoughts than your thoughts.

In such words the feeling of awe proclaims itself transcendentalist, rather than immanentist, in its faith; and this feeling is (as Otto and Oman have reminded us) one of the most fundamental, as well as one of the most primitive, elements in all religion.

*The Moral Sense*

Throughout our survey, we have noted how insidiously the faith of the immanentist is haunted by the menace of 'amoralism'; in other words, by the tendency to blunt the sharp edge of life's moral challenge with the facile assurance that since God is in everything, everything must be more or less good. Evil comes then to be regarded as 'incomplete good'; a passion for righteousness is liable to appear somewhat extravagant and inartistic; and God Himself, as the All-pervading, ceases to be the righteous and holy Antagonist of sin, or the Judge tremendous before whose throne all must appear.

It is sometimes said that since moral standards vary from age to age, none of them can be used as a universal or absolute criterion of right or wrong. Yet in the hearts of most men, there remains an ineradicable conviction that even though the Moral Law has been interpreted differently by men at different stages of their moral development, nevertheless it has an authority of its own that is ultimate and cannot with impunity be disregarded. So, as against the Wider Immanentism there arises the moral protest that a righteous God can have no contact with evil, and therefore cannot be inherent in the whole of life. To minds with a strong ethical sense, this is the primary truth about God; and whatever intellectual difficulties may be involved in it, they will insist that these must be subordinated to the Moral Law, even if thereby some limitation is imposed upon the 'all-ness' of God.

*The Sense of the Distinctive Value of the Particular*

The immanentist, with his vision of the unity of all life, is often inclined to merge the individual in the whole, and to maintain that it is only as part of the whole that the individual or the particular can be rightly understood or can achieve its own highest destiny.

In this, there is assuredly a valuable element of truth. But there is also in the minds of many men a contrary desire, to affirm that the true significance of life is to be found in individual persons or particular events, and that it is in the *uniqueness* of these that their real value consists. In the realm of religion,

this leads to an emphasis upon personality, special revelations, and the 'once-for-all-ness' of certain divine events. This problem is not confined to Christianity, but is as wide as religion itself. For all over the world we find a certain type of mind to which the claim to finality seems to be of the very essence of religion; and the 'Relativism', which is generally associated with the idea of universal Divine indwelling in divers forms and modes, appears to such minds to be destructive of all religious authority. So this conviction always leads to a strong protest against the Wider Immanentism, and increased emphasis upon the transcendence of God and the finality of His unique acts of self-revelation.

Thus we see that the periodic revivals of Transcendentalism, as well as of Immanentism, rest upon deep-rooted tendencies, often instinctive rather than reasoned, but refusing to be ignored even by those whose primary interests lie in the search for intellectual satisfaction. This leads us to the third main conclusion which emerges from our study, and to this we must now turn.

## C. The Necessity for the Middle Path

### *The Impossibility of either Extreme*

We have observed that throughout the ages, man's thought with regard to God has oscillated between two poles; the one leading to a universal Immanentism, and the other to Dualism and Transcendentalism. We noticed further that at either extreme, the line of thought, if pressed to its logical conclusion, ends by destroying itself, and makes any real knowledge of God impossible. For on the one hand, if God were purely transcendent, above, apart from, and other than, man and the world, He would not come at any point within the range of human senses, and would remain entirely outside human knowledge. In so far as He is known to us at all, He comes within our minds, and to that extent becomes immanent in us. Further, if man's knowledge of God is anything more than a purely individual experience—in other words, if it is concerned in any way with the social relationships of men, and the world in which they live—then it must pass through and make use of certain

material phenomena, such as sight, sound, and other channels, and appeal to the human senses, through which men communicate with each other and with the world outside. In that case, God may be regarded as to some extent immanent also in these material things. In short, a God who is not immanent at all would be a God entirely unknown to mankind; and a God who is not immanent in the world except in individual souls could not become the centre of a social religion. Therefore, some reaction from extreme Transcendentalism to a more central position is essential for intelligible thought, and even more for the preservation of the values of religion.

At the same time, this reaction cannot swing the whole way across to the other extreme of thorough-going Immanentism, without equally endangering the essentials of thought and of religion; for unless some element of transcendence is preserved, there is nothing to 'come and indwell' in man or the world; and an affirmation of Divine immanence becomes a merely tautological statement that 'God (or the Universe) dwells within Himself (or Itself)'.

It is true that among immanentist philosophers, there are some who maintain that God cannot be conceived of apart from the universe, and that God and the universe are mutually necessary to each other. But most of these still ascribe to the idea of 'God' a value which they do not find in that of the sum-total of the universe; and thereby at least some element of transcendence seems to be implied.

All this seems to show that an absolutely thorough-going Transcendentalism and an absolutely thorough-going Immanentism are alike impossible; and this of itself implies the necessity for a Middle Path.

It is true that the desire of the human mind to achieve consistency has led some thinkers to go almost, if not quite, the whole way towards either extreme:—Śaṅkara, Eckhart, Spinoza, in the direction of Universal Monism; orthodox Islam, and present-day Barthianism, in the direction of thorough-going Transcendentalism. But the majority, in every age, have followed a path somewhere midway between the two extremes, leaning at times to one side, and at times to the other. Moreover, whenever this 'leaning' has gone very far in either

direction, it has almost always been met by a decided protest and an emphasis on the other side: an emphasis which has survived as long as it has been needed as a protest, but has not generally justified itself in its extreme form as a permanently satisfying creed.

Such protests and reactions, rooted (as we have seen them to be) in elemental human nature, are likely to recur in the future, as they have in the past; and indeed each of these, in its way, safeguards the Middle Path, which alone seems able to secure a place for the many and diverse elements of which Truth as a whole is made up. It is true that to minds of thorough-going logical consistency, the Middle Path will probably always appear to be a way of illogical compromise and timid evasion of the consequences of clear thinking. Certainly, on the purely intellectual plane, it may seem less heroic than the more thorough-going philosophies that flank it on either side. But while these soon issue in conclusions which leave no logical place for human effort or the sense of moral obligation, the Middle Path has proved to be a highway which leads the mind on, without closing the doors to enterprises of high moral and spiritual adventure; and thus it proves to be the Way of the Higher Life.

*The Christian 'Norm' within the Middle Path*

Can we go beyond the general counsel to 'keep the Middle Path' and avoid the extremes which would rule out either 'God above', or 'God within'? The Middle Path is a broad one, and many ways are open for travellers along it. Is the Christian free to choose any one of these, so long as he does not go to the extreme of denying either one or the other of the great complementary truths about God? Probably it is best to leave open a wide range of choice in this matter. Yet since the New Testament is the Christian's norm, and the teaching of Christ his highest standard, he will be wise if he lays his central emphasis on the personal and moral qualities of God, as Father, Saviour, Friend, and (above all) as Love, rather than on the more abstract conception of God as the All-Pervading or the All-inclusive. For Christianity is not primarily a philosophy, but a message of salvation, and a way of life.

*The Need for Adventure within the Middle Path*

While we thus commend the Middle Path, we would not wish to see the Church simply keeping to the old ways, or clinging to the past with the rigidity or timidity which has sometimes characterized Christian orthodoxy. The Church of the Living God ought always to be ready to listen to His Living Voice, bidding her repent of her past failures, and move out into new ways of life and thought. Yet in obeying this Voice, the Church will remember that God is not speaking now for the first time, nor yet for the last; and that His guidance is not the exclusive prerogative of our generation. The experience of the past, though never infallible, cannot be merely brushed aside as valueless; but it needs to be related to new discoveries and revelations. If we Christians feel called to move on to a fresh position, we shall do so not merely as blind revolutionaries, nor as idle 'seekers to hear some new thing', but as responsible stewards of a trust which we inherit from the past; a trust which we may not keep tied up in a napkin to protect it from harm, but which we are called upon to use and develop and modify—yet always in a spirit of reverence and remembrance.

## D. The Christian Answer to the Special Challenges of Today

In the light of the general conclusions which we have reached with regard to the necessity of Immanentism, the necessity of Transcendentalism, and the necessity of the Middle Path, we may now turn to consider the bearing of these conclusions upon the special situation which confronts the Church today.

For today, while the main body of orthodox Christian theology still remains broadly in central position between the extremes of Immanentism and Transcendentalism, there are insistent invitations to the Church to move further to the right or to the left. These are being heard in all parts of the world; and in India, the traditional home of a great immanentist religion, they are likely to raise issues of peculiar importance.

On the one hand comes a challenge, mainly (though not wholly) from outside the Church, in the name of 'the Wider Immanence', and in India especially from the Newer Hinduism. On the other hand, a loud summons is being sounded, almost entirely within the Church itself, from the exponents of what may be called 'the New Orthodoxy', both Catholic and Protestant. Let us consider first the latter call, and the answer to it.

*The Answer to the Challenge of 'the New Orthodoxy'*

In our study of 'the post-War Reaction against Immanentism', we have already noted the characteristics of this challenge; and there is no need to describe it again in detail here. It urges the Church to move decisively towards the transcendentalist side of the Middle Path, and to affirm uncompromisingly its faith in God as the Creator, infinite, perfect, apart, who can be known to us only through His own acts of self-revelation.

It warns the Church that she has been dallying all too long with a heresy that has sapped her moral dynamic and obscured her spiritual vision—the heresy that views God primarily as the essential Indweller of the Universe; and that because of the broad tolerance thereby encouraged, she has lost her sense of the fundamental Christian antitheses between God and His Creation, the Supernatural and the Natural, Eternity and Time, Good and Evil, the Church and The World. All this is the inevitable result of yielding to the temptation to see God in everything, or to bring everything within the Divine Unity. But now let the Church frankly abandon all such attempts; let her revert to the Dualism that is inherent in the Bible and in the Catholic Faith; let her cease from trying to harmonize her doctrines with modern thought, or to bring them into a single consistent philosophical system. Her business is to proclaim the Gospel of God, as a 'word' or revelation which breaks in upon us from another sphere, entirely other than anything attainable by human knowledge. She must insist upon the infinite 'qualitative' difference between God and man, between the Bible and human writings, between the Incarnation in Christ and all other Divine indwellings in man or nature, between the Kingdom of God and all human activities on this earth. Then, and not till then, will the Church recover her Divine authority;

then her claim to reveal God as the Absolute and the Final will carry conviction; and then men will be led through her to worship Him, not as the All-pervading Indweller, but as the Infinitely Other, 'the high and holy one that inhabiteth Eternity'. Such is the challenge which is brought to the Church today by many Christian leaders, of widely different types, Fundamentalist, Catholic, and Barthian; who are, however, agreed on this, that a broad conception of Divine Indwelling in all the universe is a menace to Christian orthodoxy.

In our discussion of the reaction against Immanentism in the previous chapter, we have already indicated implicitly the main outlines of the answer which (as it seems to us) the Church may best give to this challenge of the New Orthodoxy; and it will suffice here to give a brief résumé of that answer.

We would welcome and lay to heart the warning of the New Orthodoxy against the dangers which beset an easy-going idea of universal Divine Indwelling. We agree that a God who is merely the Indweller of the world as we know it can never satisfy our highest ideals, or command our whole-hearted worship. We need Someone beyond and above the world, in whom our souls can rest, as the Perfectly Good.

But the New Orthodoxy, like many other useful protests, has overstepped itself into extravagance. Its one-sidedness, its dismissal of all relative and partial knowledge as valueless for salvation, and its claim to have received from God the only key to absolute truth:—these are features which may well give us pause ere we obey its summons.

There is in particular one point at which the New Orthodoxy (both Catholic and Barthian) seems to us to come into conflict, not only with what it calls 'the modern mind', but also with the teaching of Christ as recorded in the New Testament; and that is, in its appeal to theology and *a priori* dogmas, rather than to human experience, as the basis of its claim to possess a Divine revelation. Now this dogmatic note, while it may gain a temporary hearing from minds that desire authority and certainty more than aught else, is likely in the long run to prove to be a source of weakness rather than of strength. For the general impression which the organized Church today creates in the minds of

unprejudiced observers is, that it is a venerable institution, well-meaning, and in many respects beneficent; but essentially mediocre, and displaying few indications of power or capacity beyond the normal. In such circumstances, for the Church simply to reiterate claims to possess final truth and absolute Divine authority, will not only fail to carry conviction, but rather add to the prevalent scepticism. If this claim is to gain a hearing, it must be accompanied (if not preceded) by signs of unique spiritual dynamic, unmistakable to the eyes of all impartial observers, as something different from anything that 'the world' can show. Today, however, while no one would deny that the advocates of orthodoxy are often displaying real spiritual power, this does not appear to be confined to them—as it *ought* to be, on their own theory that they alone possess the final truth. Moreover, this spiritual dynamic is found to be distributed among types of orthodoxy whose several claims to finality largely annul each other. It is found in a Loyola, as well as in a Luther; in a Moody and Sankey Mission, as well as in the Anglo-Catholic Congress; and even beyond the bounds of Christendom. In the light of the Wider Immanentism, all this offers confirmation of the belief that God dwells in men's hearts in many ways; but it is disconcerting to any type of theology that claims the exclusive possession of truth given by God Himself in a final form.

In this matter of the appeal to experience rather than to 'given' theological dogma, the modern mind is surely in accord with a central principle of the Bible. For in the most vital parts of the Bible—such as the Prophets, the Psalms, and (above all) in the teaching of Christ—theology, of the technical or dialectic type, receives but little explicit attention; and the living message centres round the witness to religious experience.

But the New Orthodoxy generally seems to refuse, often with resentment, any suggestion that its doctrines should be submitted to the test of experience, or to any kind of scientific scrutiny. Now we may agree that spiritual values cannot be measured or analysed by the methods of physical science. Nevertheless, if they are real, their effects should be manifest through things that are within the scope of experience. 'By their fruits ye shall know them'; and to that extent they cannot

be wholly exempted from scientific methods of observation and appraisal.

Our answer, therefore, to the New Orthodoxy, whether Catholic or Barthian, would run somewhat as follows: 'We agree to many of your positive affirmations; but we reject most of your negative corollaries, even where the latter may seem to be the logical consequence of the former. We are not prepared to relegate the Divine indwelling in Nature and in mankind to a position of comparative unimportance. We do not find the sharp lines that you draw between the Divine and the human, the supernatural and the natural, or even between man and the great Tide of Life in the rest of the universe, lying exactly where you so confidently place them. We believe that the operations of God are on a wider scale than your thorough-going Transcendentalism will admit. It is magnificently consistent; but it does not meet all the demands of Life. While it waves the banner of orthodoxy, it displays not a few of the characteristics of heresy; and were it to prevail in the Church, the cause of true Catholicity would suffer.

*The Answer to the Challenge of 'the Wider Immanentism'*

At the present moment, the challenge of Immanentism to the Church is less vigorous than that of Transcendentalism; and the *Zeitgeist* seems to be on the side of the latter. Still, the call of the former persists, and cannot be merely ignored.

Although this comes mainly from those who stand somewhat apart from the organized Church, it is not unfriendly to religion, or even to the Church. Those who issue it are definitely opposed to a materialistic view of life, and desire to uphold the reality and supremacy of things spiritual. It is indeed in the interest of spiritual values that they make their appeal to the Church to abandon her 'untenable' claim to possess final truth and an absolute supernatural revelation; and instead, to take her place in the wide stream of humanity, as one of the seekers (and also one of the contributors) in the great quest for Truth and Life. They assure the Church that if she will do this, she will in the long run gain more than she will lose. She will have free scope to testify to the reality of her own experience of God's Presence in all her activities,

without the invidious necessity of trying to depreciate the significance of His operations outside her own borders. She will no longer have to fight a losing battle against the growing inroads of Science into her domain, but will be able to welcome all new truth without fear or suspicion. She need not fear that she will be called upon to endorse the extremer forms of Pantheism or Monism, in which all differences of value are lost; only she is asked to submit her doctrines to the universal tests of reason and experience, and to abstain from *a priori* claims to possess Absolute and Universal Truth. If she will do this, then she may be confident that, if there is an inherent superiority in her teachings, this will in due course win the general assent of mankind. It is true that in this surrender of her exclusive claims, she may seem for a time to lose her distinctive message; but she will find it again through a wider vision of the Indwelling God pervading all His creation, and in a richer experience of His presence, beyond all barriers of creed, and in the hearts of all His children. For *magna est veritas, et praevalebit.*

It is in such terms as these that the invitation comes to the Church today from the prophets of the Wider Immanence. They are found in several groups. Some of them make their appeal on the basis of the science of Comparative Religion, through which they have learnt to welcome truth in many unexpected quarters, and to be chary of hasty denials or exclusive claims. One of the greatest forerunners of these, Max Müller, wrote:

> I hold that there is a divine element in every one of the great religions of the world. . . . I hold that there is nowhere any belief in God except as the result of a divine revelation, the effect of a divine spirit working in man. . . . All religions are but stammering; our own as much as that of the Brahmins. They all have to be translated.[1]

In recent years, this attitude towards the religions of the world has led on to a movement for Inter-religious fellowship, understanding, and co-operation; and this movement, too, endorses the appeal to the Church to adopt a broader thought

[1] *Life and Letters of Max Müller,* Vol. II, p. 464.

of God and His operations. A Christian leader of the Inter-religious Fellowship movement (himself a member of the ancient Syrian Church of St. Thomas in India), writes:

> It is no use for any one of the existing systems of religion to try and meet the situation and to solve the problems of life in this modern world. . . . No one religion is capable of it; for at its best, any single religion seems to have realized only one or a few aspects of the Infinite God.—The challenge then is: Are religions prepared to come together and work together, and face this distracted world—distracted by all the forces which tend towards the denial of God?[1]

The policy here advocated is clearly possible only on the basis of the Wider Immanentism, and a recognition of God's indwelling in all the chief religions of the world.

A similar challenge to the Church comes from the side of Hinduism, and particularly of the Newer Hinduism, which is prepared to go a long way with Christianity in its moral and spiritual teaching, but rejects decisively its claim to finality. Sir S. Radhakrishnan is a well-known exponent of this point of view, which is apparent in all his works, and especially in his *East and West in Religion*.[2] In this, he welcomes the liberal attitude shown by the American authors of the Survey of missionary work published in 1932 under the title of *Re-Thinking Missions*; and urges that the real future of Christianity (at least in India) lies with those Christians who are ready to abandon the orthodox claim to finality, and to join with other faiths in 'a co-operative search for truth'. The basis of such a search would be the conception of universal (but also graded) Divine immanence, which is of the essence of Hinduism.[3]

Such appeals as this are strengthened (at least indirectly) by tendencies at work in quarters where the predominant interest is political rather than religious. For instance, wherever the principles of democracy have been accepted, the Christian

[1] From an article entitled 'Inter-religious Co-operation', by A. A. Paul, General Secretary of the International Fellowship, in the magazine, *Young Men of India*, July, 1934.

[2] London, 1933.

[3] *East and West in Religion*, p. 27. Cf. the same writer's *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, pp. 100, 199; and his *Hindu View of Life*, London, 1935, pp. 19 f.

claim to 'World-Dominion' in the sphere of religion is felt to strike a note unpleasantly suggestive of political Imperialism. The ideal of a Christianity which is willing to co-operate in a League of Religions is far more akin to the aspirations of Labour and Socialism in the modern world (as well as of those who believe in the parallel ideal of a League of Nations in international relations) than the conception of world-wide religious supremacy, however spiritually expressed.

The ideals of Pacifism, too, which are widespread among the younger generation today, are more akin to the Wider Immanentism, with its call to reconciliation and co-operation between divers points of view, than to Christian orthodoxy, with its military metaphors of 'world-conquest', 'surrender', and 'sovereignty'.

The ideal of the Wider Immanentism is also making a strong appeal today to many who, while unable to give an intellectual assent to the demands of orthodoxy, are yet anxious to safeguard the spiritual values which they believe to lie within it. To some of those, the vision of God as the Universal Indweller has come almost as a fresh revelation, enabling them to preserve their faith in a Living God and in the spiritual background of life, while freeing them from the demand that they should assent to dogmas which their reason refuses to endorse. To others again, who had thought of themselves as outside all forms of religion, it seems to offer the possibility of a bridge between agnosticism and faith, and a way to the recovery of some of those values of life which Materialism had destroyed.[1]

Thus the appeal of the Wider Immanentism comes to the Church along many lines today and it seems to many to have the main trend of history on its side. For a survey of history shows that, on the whole, the development of religion has been in the direction of wider views of life and of God; and that thereby the many varieties of religious experience have already been to some extent harmonized. It is true that the development has not been unbroken, nor unchallenged by protests—

[1] See, e.g., C.E.M. Joad's *Counter Attack from the East*, London, 1933, in which the writer, hitherto a frank sceptic, proclaims himself akin in spirit to Radhakrishnan, with his 'fundamentally spiritual view of the Universe and his passionate affirmation of God' (p. 212).

of which our age is witnessing some of the most vigorous. But these protests, though often timely, have not been able to stay the general movement of thought towards a wider outlook. That may be partly because each type of orthodoxy that claims finality for itself has of necessity come into conflict with every other type of orthodoxy that makes similar claims for itself; and thus the various orthodoxies have destroyed each others' credentials, and have not held within themselves any unifying principle that could embrace the whole truth in its manifoldness. As against such a 'house divided against itself', the Wider Immanentism, with its more modest claims to a knowledge that is but partial and relative, seems to offer a hope of reconciliation between the various aspects of truth; and thus makes a strong appeal to those who are weary of the strife of creeds, and desire above all things unity, peace, and goodwill.

What should be the Christian answer to this appeal of the Wider Immanentism? We have indicated some of its many attractions—the breadth and unity of its outlook, the reasonableness and charity of its spirit. In India especially, it comes with peculiar persuasiveness, because it is in close harmony with a central element in Indian thought, and it seems to offer a hope of bridging the gulf which so often exists between the Western tradition of Christianity and the heart of India, and enables us to view the philosophy of India as a true *preparatio evangelica.*

Some of the criticisms which the Wider Immanentism brings against the Church are such as the Church certainly will do well to heed. There is both room and need for a broader vision, a wider charity and a humbler attitude, than are commonly found among exponents of the Gospel of Christ. Nevertheless, its whole-hearted acceptance by the Christian Church involves some very fundamental difficulties. We may agree with its advocates that the fences with which the Church has sometimes sought to limit the Divine Presence, and the dividing-lines by which she has separated her own preserves from the world at large, have often been out of correspondence with the real dividing-lines of life, and may rightly be questioned. But still there will always remain a need for some kind of division between right and wrong, valuable and valueless, true and false. If the lines along which

such divisions have been marked in the past do not satisfy our present-day knowledge and ideals, it may be necessary to remove them; but it will then be no less necessary to discover new ones. For a map of life without any such guiding-lines would be like Lewis Carroll's chart of the sea in *The Hunting of the Snark*— 'without the least vestige of land; a perfect and absolute blank'.

In place of this 'blank', the Christian must fill in his picture of God with those qualities which Christ has taught him to think of as both human and Divine; fatherliness, friendship, saviourhood, self-sacrifice, love. Wherever he finds these qualities displayed, there with confidence he may hail the presence of God; but where he finds them denied, by hatred or selfishness, there he cannot think of God as immanent at all, except as their 'immanent Antagonist'. If he finds them absent (as in the lower levels of creation), he does not indeed deny the presence of God in some of His modes of Being; but it is only in the higher personal forms of life that he can recognize that central and supremely valuable element in God which lies at the heart of the Christian Good News, that 'God is Love; and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him'.

Such is (at least in part) the answer which may be given to the two great challenges of today, by those who, with the present writer, believe in the wisdom of the Middle Path.

# CHAPTER XV

## SOME UNSOLVED PROBLEMS OF DIVINE INDWELLING

THE conclusions which we reached in the preceding chapter are of a broad and general character: and within the limits of the Middle Path which we have advocated, a wide variety of interpretations are possible. Also there remain a number of problems which, at the present stage of human knowledge, appear to be insoluble. It may be well, however, before bringing our study to its close, to consider some of these problems a little further. For even if a complete solution is not thereby attainable, it may be possible to see more clearly the issues involved, and the direction in which a solution may ultimately be sought. We turn therefore, in our last chapter, to some of these problems.

### A. THE INADEQUACY, AND YET THE INEVITABILITY, OF 'SPATIAL' TERMS

*Spatial Terms are inadequate for describing the Presence of a personal God*

This has been frankly recognized, even by many of the advocates of 'the Wider Immanence'; and we have seen that some of these have in recent years given vigorous expression to their dissatisfaction with such terms as 'immanence' and 'indwelling', on the ground that these are too closely associated with ideas of space and place.

Such misgivings are not new. In the development of religion from lower forms to higher, man's thought has continually been rising to levels where the old terms have been felt to be inadequate or even misleading; and protests against the use of 'human' or 'material' similes to describe God have been frequent. For instance, in the third century B.C., the Greek translators of the Old Testament showed their uneasiness at some of the anthropomorphic descriptions of God in the Hebrew Scriptures, by substituting others of a more 'spiritual'

kind.[1] Similar issues are manifest in the controversy concerning the 'hands' and 'feet' of God, which arose in the fourth century A.D., between the Egyptian monks and the followers of Origen;[2] or again at the Reformation, in the disputes with regard to the Presence in the Eucharist, whether it is 'spiritual' or 'substantial';[3] and also in modern criticisms of the traditional Catholic view of sacramental grace.[4] Often it has proved easier to object to the old terms than to suggest new ones that are entirely satisfactory; for human language, even at its best, is never wholly adequate for the purpose of expressing spiritual conceptions or realities.

Now the terms 'immanence' and 'indwelling' are certainly suggestive primarily of spatial relationships, and of the localizing of something that can be measured and defined by the methods of physical science.[5] Moreover, our survey has shown us that the use of these terms has often led to 'sub-personal' conceptions of God and His operations, suggesting that the Divine grace and presence are 'things', which may be located by analysis, measured in quantities, and dispensed by quasi-mechanical channels. Against such conceptions, spiritual religion has repeatedly raised its voice in protest, maintaining that they are not worthy of God. Nevertheless, the protest has not succeeded in permanently displacing the spatial terms; for often they seem to be the only terms available. So in the case of 'immanence' or 'indwelling', it is well, before rejecting these terms, to consider whether any *better* ones are available for the purpose of describing the presence of God. For the sense of that presence is so vital for religion that it cannot without fatal loss be left undescribed or ignored.

[1] E.g., in Exodus iv, 16, where the Hebrew reads: 'They saw the God of Israel', but the Greek renders, 'They saw the place where the God of Israel stood'.

[2] See, e.g., Dr W. Bright's article, 'Theophilus of Alexandria', in Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, London, Vol. IV, 1887, p. 1,002.

[3] See above, pp 168 ff.

[4] See above, p. 215.

[5] It is rather strange that the term 'immanence', though hardly used in scientific writings, and mainly confined to religion and philosophy, seems to have acquired a definitely 'spatial' significance. See above, p. 6.

*Are any better Terms available?*

The most obvious answer is offered by the word 'spirit', and the adjective 'spiritual'. But these, though often used glibly, are in fact curiously elusive in their meaning. Negatively, they certainly denote the antithesis of 'matter' and 'material'; but as soon as we attempt to give them any positive content, that content seems to acquire a more or less material significance.[1]

Again, if we select the terms 'person' and 'personal', which many of the critics of 'spatial' metaphors are anxious to safeguard, we find that these in turn are open to question, by reason of the limitations with which personality, as we know it, is always associated.[2]

Or once more, if we select the term 'influence', we find that while it certainly seems more elastic and less bound by spatial limitations than 'immanence', it does not really suggest a personal presence, such as the presence of God, as conceived by a Theistic Religion.

So it seems that none of the alternative terms that are available are sufficiently comprehensive to be entirely satisfactory for our purpose, or to enable us to dispense with the use of all 'spatial' terms in this connexion. To do this would be to impoverish our thought of God, rather than to ennoble it, and would leave us with a Great Vacuum, deprived of a content that it needs.

*Spatial Terms must be used; but with a Recognition of their Inadequacy*

We conclude therefore that we may, and indeed must, continue to employ spatial terms, such as 'immanence' and 'indwelling'. But at the same time, we shall need to be on our guard against a facile contentment with them, as though

[1] This may be illustrated from many languages. The Hebrew *ruach*, the Greek *pneuma*, the Latin *spiritus*, the German *geist*, the Sanskrit *ātman*, all have at times a certain material significance (for instance, to denote 'wind' or 'breath' in the physical world), as well as the contrary significance, of that which is immaterial.

[2] See above, p. 219.

they were really adequate for expressing the truth about God and His presence. For in Him there are elements that transcend all such categories—elements personal, moral, spiritual, which spatial metaphors can never fully describe. Only with this proviso can we wisely speak of the immanence or indwelling of God. But until we can fashion terms richer in content than those now available for us, we must be content with the best that we have.

## B. Divine Indwelling in the World of Nature

### *The Problems of Nature-Immanentism*

Our survey has shown us that from quite early times, some thinkers, both in the East and in the West, began to picture God as dwelling within the world of Nature; and this idea has persisted in most of the great religious traditions. In the Christian Church, we can trace it, from Origen and Augustine, through Francis of Assisi and the Renaissance, down to the Romanticists and the Nature-Poets of the nineteenth century, and Robert Bridges in our own age.

The modern exponents of this Nature-Immanentism have been in many ways stimulated by recent trends of scientific thought; but Science has at the same time raised problems which Immanentism has not found it easy to answer. For nineteenth century Science was built largely upon two ideas; that of the Uniformity of Nature, and that of Evolution; and neither of these is easily harmonized with the idea of the indwelling of a personal God in the universe. Let us now consider these in fuller detail.

### *Does the Uniformity of 'Nature' leave Room for the Activity of God?*

The investigations of Science, especially during the last two hundred years, have shown that the processes of Nature generally exhibit fixed sequences, so that it has become possible to predict with increasing certainty what is going to happen, by means of a study of what has gone before. With every fresh discovery of Science, the realm of such 'orderly happenings' has grown larger; and the sphere of the unknown, the supernatural and

the miraculous has shrunk correspondingly within narrower and narrower limits. At length many men of science became convinced that in course of time it would become possible to measure and classify everything that happens, and to bring it under the domain of 'Natural Law'. The logical outcome of this was the conception of the world as a vast and complex machine, the working of which is predestined, even to its minutest details, by its own structure, and in which no place is left for intervention or modification by any 'free' factors. The whole is governed by mechanical processes; 'mind' and 'spirit' are merely by-products of these, 'thrown off' by them, as 'a shadow thrown off by the body's physical processes'.[1] The idea that God can possess any power of choice or initiative, or can exercise any kind of autonomous influence on the course of events, must be dismissed as an illusion.

This 'scientific' view of life became prevalent in Europe during the nineteenth century, and its influence was felt even within the Christian Church. Christian theologians began to urge that God must be looked for in the order of Nature, rather than in the breaches of that order; and miracles, which had formerly been regarded as the greatest bulwark of the Faith, now began to cause Christian apologists obvious uneasiness, and were either denied altogether, or reduced to the minimum compatible with any profession of adherence to the historic faith of Christendom.[2] God (we were told) must indwell the whole process of the world; and to limit this operation to certain miraculous 'inbreaks' would be to impute to Him a clumsy method of putting things right by a series of afterthoughts.

### *The mechanistic View of the World excludes all free Activities, human as well as Divine*

The denial of miracles certainly seemed to be a natural deduction from a study of the uniformity of Nature; but it is a conclusion which involves serious, if not fatal, consequences for religion of any kind. For if the Divine operation in Nature is expressed only through the working of immutable laws, what

[1] J. Needham in *Science, Religion and Reality*, London, 1926, p. 227.

[2] See, e.g., J. M. Thompson, *Miracles in the New Testament*, London, 1900.

place is left for either God or man, as a free, personal agent? Does not 'God' then become simply a synonym for the vast unconscious Machine of the Universe, and 'man' a part of the world-machine? Many men who are quite ready to deny the possibility of the intervention of God in the course of events still cherish the belief that they themselves are free agents.

Now it is quite permissible to maintain that the evidence for the reality of free human activity is more convincing than any evidence for such activity on the part of God. But it is not reasonable to accept the evidence in favour of the former, and then refuse each to consider the evidence for the latter, on the ground that Science has proved it to be *a priori* impossible, because of 'the uniformity of Nature'. For if once we admit that the constitution of the universe is such that it may allow for free acts by personal agents, human or divine, then whenever such acts are performed, the purely mechanical working of the world-machine is interrupted at that point, and a new factor is brought in—that of 'will' or 'choice';—a factor which cannot be analysed or measured quantitatively, and of which therefore Science can (because of the very nature of its own methods) take no cognizance.

We conclude, then, from the analogy of human activity, that there is nothing inherently unreasonable in believing that God, as well as man, may 'act upon' the world, even while dwelling within it so closely that it is not always possible for us to draw a line of distinction between God and the world. In other words, Transcendence and Immanence are not mutually exclusive.

*Freedom is not inconsistent with Order*

If an objection is then raised that such 'acting upon' the world by God is not properly described by such terms as 'immanence' or 'indwelling', we may point out that in human life indwelling is not found to be inconsistent with personal activity, which manifests itself both in orderliness as well as in spontaneity. We often say, for instance, that we can see 'the mind' of some captain of industry in the organization which he has built up; or the genius of a ruler in the constitution of the state which he has planned. In such cases, the element of order is

by no means contradictory to (but rather, essential for) the idea of personal indwelling and activity. Such order is an expression of the consistent, orderly mind which planned it; and it also provides the kind of 'framework' without which personal activity cannot operate intelligently. In utter chaos, freedom and choice lose their meaning. At the other extreme, they also become impossible, when the rules of an organization become so rigid and unalterable that even the mind that made them cannot modify them; for then it ceases to have any relation to them beyond a purely historical one. It is true that in the case of the human creator of an organization, his relation to his creation is primarily 'transcendent'; for his centre of consciousness remains always outside it, and he can continue to exist, even if his creation perishes. Yet, so long as it is influenced by his personality and action, his relation to it remains intimate, and we do not hesitate to say that he 'lives in it', because from him the organization gains vitality, and in it we see a reflection of his spirit.

Similarly, although the operation of God in relation to Nature, as viewed by the theist, is primarily transcendent (for it is the action 'upon' Nature of that which is above and distinct from Nature), still it may be spoken of as an 'indwelling', because of the intimacy of the relation. But it is an indwelling which brings into the processes of Nature an element of freedom and choice.

### *The general Trend of Modern Science*

Generally speaking, the Science of the twentieth century seems to be less hostile to the idea of freedom in the universe than was the Science of the nineteenth century. It is true that in some quarters, the mechanistic view is still predominant;[1]

[1] Dr Needham, writing in 1926, of recent theories of the processes of life, says: 'At the present day, the situation is, in effect, the complete triumph of mechanistic biology' (*Science, Religion and Reality*, p. 235). He complains that Christian theologians of the 'modernist' type try to exploit the small minority of 'vitalist' biologists, in order to create the impression that Science has abandoned the mechanistic view. At the same time, he himself explicitly exempts mind, and all mental processes, from mechanistic uniformity, and says: 'Life, in all its forms, is the phenomenal disturbance created in the world of matter and energy, when mind comes into it' (op. cit., p. 251).

but it certainly does not pass unchallenged, even in the ranks of scientists themselves. Sir Arthur Eddington has been one of the chief protagonists of the idea of freedom or 'indeterminacy' in Nature. 'The recent tendencies of scientific thought (he says) lead to the belief that mind is a greater instrument than was formerly recognized in prescribing the nature and laws of the external world as studied in physical Science.' He describes mind and spirit as effecting 'a direct interference with the course of events in the material world'.[1]

Still more recently, another famous scientist, Prof. Max Planck, while opposing the 'Indeterminism' of Eddington and Jeans, has said: 'It is no longer possible to regard the Law of Causality [in Nature] as an expression of inviolable regulation that inheres in events;' and he maintains that no scientist need now feel called upon to deny 'the independence of one's will from the Law of Causality'.[2] In the same volume, Dr Lloyd Morgan, writing as a psychologist, holds that while Science cannot itself take any cognizance of creative activity, either human or divine, neither does it dispute the reality of such activity in its own sphere, which lies beyond Science.[3]

Such expressions of opinion by modern scientists are significant. They do not, it is true, offer us any direct endorsement of any theory of Divine activity in the world, such as Religion is concerned to maintain; nor can we claim from them any definite support for a theory of Divine immanence in the world. But they do leave open the way for the view that at the very heart of the universe there is an element of indeterminacy, freedom, and personal activity. If so, the idea of a personal God, dwelling in and operating upon the universe, cannot be simply ruled out in the name of Science, as inadmissible *a priori*. The dogmatism of Huxley and Haeckel with regard to the Fixed Laws of Nature has given place to a more cautious note, which finds notable expression in some words of Lord Balfour, written in 1926:

> About the course of Nature we know little; yet surely we know enough to make us hesitate to call it uniform . . . If we

[1] In *Science, Religion, and Reality*, pp. 214, 217.

[2] In *Science Today* (ed. by J. G. Crowther), London, 1934, pp. 345, 366.

[3] Op. cit., p. 148.

> are directly aware of anything, it is of ourselves as personal agents; if anything can be proved by direct experiment, it is that we can, in however small a measure, vary the 'natural' distribution of matter and energy. We can certainly act on our environment; and our action constitutes a spiritual invasion of the physical world: it is a miracle. . . . In the present state of our knowledge . . . we have no choice but to acquiesce provisionally in an unresolved dualism. Our experience has a double outlook. The first we may call material. It deals with objects which are measurable, calculable, capable (up to a point) of precise definition. The second is spiritual: it deals with the immeasurable, the incalculable, the indefinable, and (let me add) the all-important . . . . [The two] belong to the same universe; they influence each other; somewhere and somehow they must be in contact along a common frontier. But where is that frontier to be drawn?[1]

Such a view of the relation between Science and Religion, recognizing both realms as real, and as in contact with each other, but refusing to define precisely where the frontier between them is to be drawn, is a view in substantial harmony with the wider Christian Immanentism. It leaves us (as Lord Balfour has said) with 'an unresolved dualism', and to that extent it must be reckoned among our unsolved problems; but at least it endeavours to take account of all the facts of life that we know.

*Divine Indwelling and the Process of Evolution*

This is an aspect of the general problem of 'God in Nature' which seems to call for special consideration. We noticed that when the idea of Evolution sprang into the forefront of public controversy in the nineteenth century, it was at first attacked by most of the upholders of orthodoxy as a deadly menace to the Faith; but it soon came to be welcomed in many religious circles, because it presented the universe, not as a dead, static Thing, but as a vast Body, instinct with life, and animated by movement and purpose.[2] The Victorian poets saw in Evolution an unfolding of the mind of God; while some of the Idealists went further, and regarded it as the emergence of God Himself.[3]

Among modern scientists, there seems to be less confidence

[1] *Science, Religion and Reality*, pp. 12, 16.

[2] See above, pp. 190 ff.

[3] See above, pp. 186, 195 f.

than in the days of Darwin that the process of Evolution governs the whole of life; but few, if any, of them are disposed to question that it is, in any case, one of the great principles of Nature. In connexion with Evolution, several further questions present themselves for our consideration.

*Is the Process of Evolution conscious or unconscious?*

We noticed that when the idea of a universal 'urge' behind Nature first came to the forefront, it was welcomed by some Christian thinkers. Certainly there is something deeply impressive in the thought of a vast movement, which will in course of time give meaning and significance to all the ebb and flow of life's surface, like some deep tide which is in the long run far more prevalent than the brief forward-and-backward swing of waves on the beach. Yet, if that movement is ultimately unconscious of its own direction, and devoid of any sense of purpose or aim (as in the case of Bergson's *élan vital*)[1], does this offer any real confirmation to faith in a personal God, or any comfort to the soul that seeks to be assured that the universe is 'ultimately friendly'? It is only if we can see, behind the 'urge', signs of a conscious Mind and Purpose, to some extent transcendent, and therefore able to control and direct it, that this thought of the great 'tide of life' becomes instinct with religious value.

Now when we ask if there are signs of purpose in the processes of Nature, we generally mean: Are there signs of a *benevolent* purpose? For signs of a malevolent purpose would by no means reassure our minds. So the question: Is there any purpose in Evolution? can hardly be dissociated from a further question: Is the Process of Evolution, as a whole, moving in the direction of increasing *Goodness*? Is it a moral process?

On this point, widely divergent views have been held by scientists. Huxley stoutly maintained that there are few or no signs of moral purpose in the story of Evolution. It is (he said) a growth towards greater complexity, and in the mental sphere, towards greater cleverness; but Nature and Man do not grow kinder or more loving, as they grow more wise and wonderful.

[1] See above, p. 227.

Among theologians, Inge inclines to a similar view; while Fosdick is more optimistic.[1] Most of our present-day leaders of thought show signs of a vehement reaction against the optimism of the Victorian Age, which generally assumed without question that Evolution meant progress in every sphere, moral as well as mental and physical. The Great War, and its aftermath, have taught our generation that 'the evolution of *evil*' is an integral part of the World-Process.

But if Evolution is not wholly in the direction of goodness, can it be a process wholly indwelt by God? Is God indwelling in the growth of the cancer, or in the brilliant intellectual development of the chemist who devises a new poison-gas wherewith to torture his fellow-men? Yet all such activities are, from the standpoint of Science, products of the evolutionary process. So if we submit this process to a *moral* analysis, it will quickly become evident that there is much in it which is far alien from that spirit of Love which Christ proclaimed to be of the essence of God. Christians, therefore, cannot regard the process of Evolution in Nature as wholly Divine.

It is true that our study of Nature may lead us to the conclusion that in it the good does on the whole prevail over the bad; and further, that the processes of Nature offer the kind of framework within which alone (as far as we can see) any great moral conflict could be fought and won. In that case, we may indeed conclude that because the whole is, on the whole, good, and better than the sum total of the parts,[2] it has been planned and indwelt by the Spirit of Love. Yet even this will not require us to see God in every detail of it, or to regard each part of it by itself as divine.

In short, the Theory of Evolution does not in itself offer any definite confirmation of the Christian view of Divine indwelling in the world or in man. In its more favourable aspects, it may help; in its less favourable, it adds to our difficulties. Whether, on the whole, the help or the difficulty will appear to outweigh the other, will probably depend ultimately on whether in our view of life the strain of optimism or of pessimism

[1] See Inge's essay 'The Idea of Progress' in *Outspoken Essays* (2nd Series), and Fosdick's *Christianity and Progress*, London, 1922, Chapter vi.

[2] Cf. Augustine's *Confessions*.

predominates. Moreover, in the evolutionary process, as in other aspects of Nature, we are not able to define accurately the frontiers between that which is Divine and that which is not Divine. So, from more than one point of view, the Theory of Evolution presents us with many unsolved problems in its relation to Divine indwelling.

## C. Divine Indwelling and the Moral Law

The problems which we have just been considering arise out of the idea of God's presence in the world at large, inanimate as well as animate, animal as well as human. If now we turn to the conception of the indwelling of God more particularly in human souls, some further problems, not easy of solution, present themselves.

### *Can God be both All-inclusive and All-Good?*

This question has comforted us frequently in the course of our historical survey; and there is not much to be added to what we have already noted.

In a rudimentary form, this problem is apparent even in the consideration of the Divine indwelling in Nature; because Nature does not seem to be all-good. But when we come to the indwelling of God in man, the difficulty becomes more acute. If we say that God is the Light that lighteneth every man, does it follow that He is in the heart of the murderer, the rake, or the heartless oppressor of the poor? Or, since good and bad qualities exist side by side in the hearts of most men, how are we to conceive of God as indwelling in this mixed soil? How, for instance, does God dwell in an artist whose keen sense of beauty is no less obvious than his selfishness or immorality, or in the mind of a scientist whose passionate love of truth goes hand in hand with a callous disregard for the sufferings of his fellow-creatures?

### *The moral Weakness of the Wider Immanentism*

When faced with this challenge, the answer of the Wider Immanentism has generally been indecisive; and its opponents have directed some of their most searching attacks towards this

point. They have urged that the broader the conception of the Divine Indwelling in mankind at large, the feebler is the sense of the moral issues of life, and of the eternal cleavage between right and wrong. Nor can this charge be lightly dismissed; for our survey of typical immanentist religions—Hinduism, Theosophy, Christian Idealism—has shown us that these do generally tend to soften the sharp antitheses of life, and to encourage a spirit of charity and acquiesence, rather than of strong, moral principles and a determination to fight for the right.[1]

The significance of this becomes more marked if we compare it with the transcendentalist types of religion, which have generally fostered a strong sense of the fundamental cleavage between right and wrong. Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Islam, although none of them have put forward any satisfying *theory* to account for the origin of evil, have all been emphatic and effective in summoning men to right conduct and the good life.[2]

In the Christian tradition too, those to whom the moral challenge has come with compelling authority have generally tended to a dualistic view of God and the world. We can see examples of this in converted sinners such as Paul, Augustine, Luther, or in austere moralists such as Rashdall or Tennant. All these (while generally according a formal recognition to the idea of universal Divine immanence) have placed the real emphasis of their message upon the essential cleavage between God and evil, and the resultant moral obligation to man to be 'on the Lord's side'; and if ever the two conceptions come into conflict with each other, it is the cleavage, rather than the unity, that they are most concerned to maintain.

It is the same with most types of religion in which the central motive is that of reform or protest, expressing itself in a struggle against wrongs or untruths. The resultant conflict generally produces a dualistic outlook, which conceives of God as the Great Leader in the fight against wrong, wholly separate from 'the other side', and limiting His interests to His own people. We see examples of this in orthodox Protestantism and Puritanism, which have sounded the note of moral obligation with vigour, but have displayed only a half-hearted interest in

[1] See above, Chaps. iii, iv and xii.

[2] See above, Chap. vi.

philosophic conceptions of Divine Indwelling, and have regarded the Wider Immanentism with misgiving, on moral grounds.

*Does the Christian Gospel recognize any Values outside the Moral Law?*

From the facts that we have just been considering, it might seem natural to conclude that a Christian should entirely abjure the Wider Immanentism, and confine his thought of the indwelling of God to the idea of a moral process in the hearts of men—and in the latter case, only in so far as men are good. To do this would certainly be to follow closely along the line of Christ's own teaching.[1] Yet just as we came to the conclusion that the moral emphasis of that teaching need not exclude (even though it does not expressly endorse) the thought of Divine indwelling over a wider range of life, so, in dealing with the relation of the Divine indwelling in general to the Moral Law, we may well hesitate to restrict the former altogether to the moral sphere. The realms of Truth and Beauty should also be recognized as shrines of the Divine presence; and it is the special function of the Wider Immanentism to help us to relate these also to God, and to see their religious significance.

At the same time, in the Gospel of Christ, the moral note does hold a position of unique centrality. The Christian's first duty is to see that the eternal issue between right and wrong is never obscured, and that Christ's picture of God as Goodness and Love stands out clear above all the broad ranges of philosophy and all the varied charms of art.

## D. Divine Indwelling and Human Personality

A further problem, which again specially concerns the indwelling of God in humanity, is that of the relation between the personality of God and the personality of the human being who is indwelt.

*Can a personal God dwell within a human Person?*

We have seen that the idea of impersonal indwelling has never proved satisfying to those who have come to worship God

[1] See above, pp. 130 ff.

as 'Father'. On the other hand, the idea of a personal indwelling within a person is full of difficulties. For it is of the essence of a person to be a self-conscious and self-determining unity.[1] How then can *another* person dwell within that unity? The idea of two centres of consciousness simultaneously existing in one person is unthinkable; and the replacement of one consciousness by another involves the replacement or annihilation of one person by another. Even the control of one person by another is a conception not without its difficulties; for in so far as a person ceases to determine himself, and is controlled from without, he becomes less of a person, and more of a 'thing'.

In earlier ages, this problem does not seem to have been felt acutely; perhaps because the sacredness of human personality was not so highly accounted of. Then, the god or spirit which indwelt a man was commonly regarded as 'possessing' the man, and suppressing his human personality. This was not held to be derogatory to the person possessed; on the contrary, such possession, whether in the form of madness, frenzy, or oracular utterance, was accounted a matter for reverence.

*The Sovereignty of human Personality.* The New Testament on the other hand, insists that a true prophet should retain the control of his own spirit, even when he speaks as God's messenger;[2] and in particular, in the teaching of Jesus Christ with regard to the Divine Indwelling in the human soul, there is no suggestion that the latter loses its individuality in the process. The union is indeed very close: 'I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one:' but the relation remains that of friendship—a term which implies distinction as well as union between the friends.[3] If we agree to this, we have again to face the difficulty of forming any intelligible conception of the way in which a personal God can dwell within the human soul. Some Christian thinkers have felt this to be so insuperable, that they have abandoned the attempt, and would restrict our thought of the indwelling God to purely

[1] See W. Temple, *The Nature of Personality*, pp. 7, 8, and 32; or Illingworth, *Personality, Human and Divine*, London, 1907, pp. 224–33.

[2] 'The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets'—1 Cor. xiv, 32.

[3] See John xv, 14, 15; xvii, 23.

abstract conceptions.[1] But these will not satisfy those who believe that they have come to know God as a personal Friend and Father, in whom the noblest qualities of human nature are both comprehended and transcended: 'Good beyond all that is good, Fair beyond all that is fair.'[2] A Christian poet, who certainly regarded Jesus as Perfect God, has sung of Him as:

> Jesus, my Shepherd, Husband, Friend,
> My Prophet, Priest and King!

Such language, while frankly anthropomorphic, is in many ways nearer to the New Testament, with its manifold human illustrations of God's working, than any philosophic attempt to solve the problem by emptying our conception of God of the greater part of its content.

*The Fact of mutual personal Indwelling in human Life and Love*

But still the problem remains: How can a personal God dwell within our hearts, as 'Shepherd, Husband, Friend', or even as Father, without invading the autonomy of our own personality?

Let us consider some illustrations from human life, such as those which Christ Himself often used. We find that in our own common relationships, human personalities are not entirely impenetrable. Husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, while each continuing to live an individual life, nevertheless also live in a very real sense 'within' each other, sharing each other's moods and emotions, and conscious of an unseen unity that links them together. We may picture them as peaks of the same mountain range, which appear to the eye as separate islands jutting out from the ocean, but are in reality parts of one and the same submerged continent, which joins them together beneath the sea. Such a spiritual union between distinct individuals is indeed very difficult to reconcile with our consciousness of the absolute sovereignty of our own personality within its own realm. Yet through human love, this

[1] Such as Tennant's '*that through which all things consist*', or Karl Barth's '*Wholly Other*'. See above, pp. 227, 242.

[2] From the Jacobite *Liturgy of St. Dionysius*.

paradox is actually accomplished within our experience; and the deeper the love, the deeper is the resultant union of spirit. Surely this may help us to recognize that the indwelling of one spirit within another is not impossible, even though it may be beyond our intellectual understanding.

Again, the psychology of the sub-conscious, even if its results are at present far from assured, at least reminds us that there is a great unexplored region which lies below the conscious surface of human personality. Dr Sanday indeed suggested that perhaps the union of the human and the Divine in Jesus Christ may be looked for in this unexplored region.[1]

However this may be, in any case modern psychology does not endorse the theory that personality is entirely impenetrable. One leading psychologist of today bids us think of 'progress towards personality' as 'a union, ever closer and deeper, with the spirit of the universe'.[2]

We conclude, then, that while the method of the Divine Indwelling in human souls is outside the range of scientific measurement and analysis, it is not to be dismissed as incredible, because of any alleged 'impenetrability' of human personality. We may indeed rest assured that the Father-God whom Christ revealed will not violate our personality by treating us merely as puppets or 'things'; and yet we may be prepared to recognize the truth in St. Paul's paradoxical affirmation: 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

## E. Divine Indwelling and the 'Absolute' Claims of Christianity

### *The Wider Immanentism and the Relativism that is associated with it*

We have observed that the wider conception of Divine indwelling is generally associated with a certain measure of 'Relativism'—that is, with the view that all human knowledge is of necessity partial and imperfect, and that absolute truth lies at present beyond our reach.[3] We noticed further that to many minds, this Relativism constitutes one of the strongest attractions

[1] W. Sanday, *Christologies, Ancient and Modern*, Oxford, 1910, pp. 155 ff.

[2] W. Brown in *Science, Religion and Reality*, p. 326.

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of the Wider Immanentism, because it appears to be in harmony with the principles of scientific study and investigation.

Relativism need not involve the denial of the existence of Absolute Truth or Value in God, or of the possibility of its being partially but really apprehended by man. It may readily admit that it is the distinctive function of Religion to point man to the absolutely Perfect, and even to interpret certain events as 'acts of God' through which He voluntarily reveals Himself to man.

But Relativism insists that before any such event or object can come into the sphere of our human knowledge, it must pass through the medium of the physical world, and of our own senses; and therefore it can never reach our minds except in a form conditioned by these limitations, and consequently only relatively true. Hence the Relativist abstains from claiming finality for any of his judgements, and keeps an open mind towards the possibility of new discoveries, which may involve a revision of his old opinions. This attitude of mind is congenial both to the scientist and to the artist. It is of the essence of scientific study to be ever progressing towards fuller truth, but never claiming finality. Similarly the artist, while ever striving to express the perfectly beautiful, knows that this is never actually attained by him, but remains always beyond his reach, tantalizing him, and tempting him onward. Both for scientist and artist, the joy of life consists in the *striving after* something more; and any claim to have achieved finality appears to be both unscientific and inartistic. Why (they ask) need Religion insist that final Truth or perfect Goodness must have been actually realized at certain points in History? Does not this rather spoil the harmony of the whole, with its many shades of value? Does it not require us to profess a belief in something which, in the very nature of the case, we never can really *know*, with our limited minds?

Yet this claim to finality is made, insistently and almost universally, by Religion. 'All the great World-Religions' (says Troeltsch)—'Judaism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Christianity, even Confucianism—claim absolute validity.'[1] Even in

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Herein is to be found one of the chief points at which Religion finds it difficult to accept the Relativism that is so often associated with the Wider Immanentism.

*The Christian Claim to possess Absolute Truth*

The claim to finality, while characteristic of Religion in general, is specially distinctive of Christianity. It is unmistakable in the Gospel records. Christ's teaching, we read, was 'with authority'; and a quiet assumption of authority underlies His whole conduct, as well as many of His sayings, such as: 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away'; 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life'.

The same assumption, that in Jesus Christ we meet with final and perfect Truth, runs through the apostolic writings of the New Testament. To St. Paul, He is the one in whom 'all the fullness of the Godhead dwells'; and the writer to the Hebrews contrasts the partial nature of earlier revelations of God with the completeness of the revelation through 'God's Son'.

When we pass on to the official definitions of Christ's person and nature in the historic Creeds, the affirmation of His 'absoluteness' becomes even more explicit. Not only is His perfection infinitely above our imperfection, but He belongs in some respects to another order of being. *We* are God's creatures; *He* is 'begotten, not made'—'the only—*unicus*—μονογενής—Son of God'. Such terms attribute to Him a 'once-for-all-ness' and finality that is unique. On this point, all the great Catholic and Orthodox theologians are at one. The Fathers of the Reformation, too, endorse the same view of Jesus Christ, except in a few small sects, such as the Socinians. His absolute perfection, and the finality of the truth proclaimed by Him, were never questioned by any professing Christians, until quite modern times; this stands as the central doctrine of the Christian Faith, believed in by Christians *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*.

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This view of the Church creates a vivid sense of the Divine Presence within her; but it does not tend to encourage the recognition of that Presence outside the Church. It is quite true that most Catholic theologians give a formal assent to the idea of universal Divine immanence; but they have rarely succeeded in relating this intelligibly to 'the sphere of Grace', or investing it with much religious significance. Indeed, if that which is perfect is within the reach of man in the Church, why should he dally with that which is imperfect outside?

Protestant Christianity has not, as a rule, claimed finality or perfection for the visible Church; and even when it has echoed the New Testament descriptions of the Church as the 'Body' or the 'Bride' of Christ, it has been careful not to identify this ideal Church with any of the existing ecclesiastical systems on earth. So the door has been left open for a wider recognition of the Divine operation outside the Church's organization, though as a matter of fact it has been only in the more liberal types of Protestantism that this 'open door' has been used for further adventures in Christian thinking.

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extreme form, this theory implies that the Bible is fully 'indwelt' by God, in such a way as to make it essentially different from all other literature, the one and only 'Book of God', perfect and infallible in all its parts. This view, again, is not conducive to much interest in the Wider Immanentism; for even if it theoretically recognizes God's operations in realms outside the Bible, it regards these as insufficient for salvation, and therefore negligible, without serious loss, by the religious soul.[1] Among the majority of modern theologians, however, this view of Biblical Inspiration has been modified, and the Bible is now generally viewed as the precious, but not wholly perfect, vessel in which the final message of Christ is to be found.

One other claim to finality requires mention; and that is the Barthian doctrine of 'The Word of God'.[2] We have seen how difficult it is for outside observers to understand what is the content and meaning of this term in the Barthian theology. It is not to be identified with the Bible as a whole, nor with the historic figure of Jesus Christ. But whatever it may be, its essential characteristics are Absoluteness, Finality and Otherness, which separate it (and with it, the heart of the Gospel) from everything else, and practically limit the effective presence of God to this 'Word' of His.

Thus we see that in every type of historic Christianity, some claim to finality and absoluteness is found.

*Relativism and the Christian Faith*

The 'relativist' note in the Wider Immanentism thus always contains a latent challenge to the 'absolutist' claims of religion, and particularly of the Christian Religion. This challenge, however, has not always been explicit. Very often, Christians have simply accepted the two ideas—that of the universal but relative indwelling of God in the whole universe, and that of His unique and final Incarnation in Jesus Christ—and have placed them alongside each other, holding them as parallel truths, without any attempt to define the relation between them. Indeed, that is probably the position today of the majority of Christian folk, including many of learning and eminence.[3] It

[1] See above, p. 173. [2] See above, pp. 239 ff. [3] See above, p. 212.

is even possible today for eminent Christian theologians to question whether Christianity itself, viewed as an institutional system, can be regarded as the final or universal religion.[1]

But so far, the belief in the finality of Jesus Christ stands unquestioned in the minds of the vast majority of Christians; and the few who do question it, such as the more radical Unitarians, are scarcely allowed the title of 'Christian' by their more orthodox brethren. Even among Modernist theologians, there seems to be little tendency to raise any question on this point.[2] While they frequently challenge the claims of 'dogma' to finality, and emphasize the relative and changing character of all human knowledge, they generally seem to assume tacitly that Christ Himself is exempt from this otherwise universal relativity. They are confident that in Him, absolute Truth and Goodness exist, and are accessible to us, so that His perfection may be contrasted with the imperfection of the Church's dogmas and traditions.[3]

*The Present-day Conflict between Relativism and Orthodoxy*

Although the Wider Immanentism within the Church rarely offers a direct challenge to the doctrine of Christ's perfection, there is an evident feeling among the orthodox theologians of today that a challenge, latent and implicit, does exist therein. They note that in the past, the acceptance of the principle of universal Divine indwelling has often led on to a definite denial of the doctrines of the Church, as in the case of Bruno, or the Hegelians, or Troeltsch; and they fear that present-day theologians of the immanentist type will find themselves inevitably led along the same path. They seem to suspect that the restraint which generally characterizes the utterances of Modernist clergy with regard to the Person of Christ is due more to an instinctive reverence for Him (or it may be to a half-conscious

[1] Thus, Inge writes in *Science, Religion and Reality* (pp. 387ff.). 'As a great historical institution, Christianity can be characterized only as the religion of the white race. An universal institutional Church is as chimerical an idea as an universal Empire.'

[2] The issue *is*, however, raised, and a negative conclusion is reached, in F. Lenwood's *Jesus, Lord or Leader?* London, 1933, pp. 127ff., etc.

[3] See, e.g., H. D. A. Major, *The Gospel of Freedom*, London, 1912, pp. 87, etc.

loyalty to the Creeds, to which most of these have pledged their assent), than to any thought-out conclusions as to the reason for admitting this one exception to their general principle. So the New Orthodoxy seems to have decided that the safest way to meet the danger which it feels to be latent is to carry the war into the enemy's camp, by bringing a counter-challenge against the whole principle of Relativism, and the Wider Immanentism with which it is so often allied. Hence, as we have seen, one of the outstanding characteristics of our day is the ultra-modern reaction against Modernism and the revival of absolutist claims, by more than one type of present-day Christian theology.[1]

*The Issue of the Conflict*

At the moment, we stand so much in the midst of this conflict, that it is difficult to forecast what will be the issue. It does not seem likely, however, that it will be decided only (or mainly) upon the basis of an appeal to such evidence as Science is prepared to recognize in its own domain. For a study of evidence along purely scientific lines can never suffice to prove (though it may suggest) the existence of an absolute or final Perfection. The methods of Science, based upon measurement or analysis, cannot do more than yield results that are approximate and relative. Most of the clearest thinkers among orthodox theologians of our day admit frankly that their own convictions have not been reached purely by such methods.[2] On the other side, too, the advocates of the Wider Immanence often display an enthusiasm which evidently springs from a deep instinctive conviction, reached through some kind of 'intuition' of the essential unity of the universe, rather than by any process of conscious reasoning. Where such a conviction is thus held, it meets the claims of Absolutism, not merely with reasoned argument, but with an *emotional* protest against something which it feels to be endangering the wholeness and beauty of the vision that it has seen of the essential unity of the universe. Now when two types of deep-rooted convictions thus come into conflict with each other, no quick solution can be looked for. The evidence available with regard to the final perfection of Christ is hardly such as to

[1] See above, Chap. xiii.

[2] See above, p. 236.

persuade either side to change its opinion. It is true that we can find in the Gospels many passages which imply, and even affirm, the absoluteness and perfection of Jesus.[1] But there are also passages of which the prima facie interpretation points the other way;[2] and though the latter are capable of interpretations which bring them into harmony with the traditional Faith of the Church, these explanations are not generally convincing to those who approach them with other pre-conceived ideas. It does not seem likely, therefore, that an appeal to evidence on the basis of a purely scientific or historical criticism will lead to any universal agreement with regard to the perfection of Jesus Christ.

There will remain a division of opinion, based upon two different types of mentality. Minds accustomed to scientific methods, even when they are conscious of the need for Religion, will in many cases decline to go beyond the affirmation that in the person of Jesus Christ, there are clear signs of an indwelling Spirit—and most will be prepared to add, of an indwelling God—in a fuller measure than has ever been manifested in any other human life. There are other types of mind, however, which cannot rest satisfied with a relativism of this kind. They yearn for something more—something final and perfect, not only in the world of ideas, but in the world of History; and they find this at some point where an assurance comes to them, through intuition or faith, with an authority beyond all question, that here final Truth or perfect Goodness is to be found. Countless souls have thus placed their faith in Jesus Christ as the final revelation of God and the perfect example of manhood; and they testify that this faith has been justified by their experience. Souls of this type stand, as it were, in the main stream of the historic Christian tradition. Many of them find themselves able to hold this faith in the final Perfection of Jesus Christ side by side with a belief in God as the all-pervading Indweller of the Universe, and do not feel that the two conceptions are out of harmony with each other. In adopting this position, they are keeping within limits which the Church has generally recognized as permissible, even though the wider

[1] E.g., Mark xiii, 31; Matt. xi, 27; John vi, 68; viii, 46, etc.

[2] E.g., Matt. xix, 17; Luke xvi, 9; xviii, 19; Mark xi, 14; John xiv, 28. Most of these passages are discussed in Lenwood's *Jesus, Lord or Leader?*

conception may lack the definite ecclesiastical authority which is attached to the doctrine of the Finality of Christ.

But there are others who do not find it easy to hold these two ideas thus side by side. To their minds, the claim for finality at one point does not fit in with the conception of an otherwise universal Relativism; and further, it goes beyond the evidence that they are prepared to accept. These stand further away from the centre of the tradition of historic Christianity. Yet they too, so long as they find in Jesus Christ the clearest revelation of God and the highest manifestation of manhood that they have known, and seek to follow Him as Lord and Master of their lives, have more in common with the Faith of the Church than with the unfaith of the world at large. The New Orthodoxy of today, however, does not seem willing to admit this, and insists that no one may be reckoned a Christian who does not subscribe to the Doctrine of the absolute Perfection of Christ. This demand has the merits of apparent simplicity and decisiveness; but does it draw the line of cleavage where Christ Himself would draw it? Rather we would suggest that wherever Jesus Christ is recognized as supreme above all others, and wherever the will to obey Him is the central and dominant motive of life, there the essence of Christian discipleship is found, whether the background of thought be that of Absolutism and Transcendentalism, or that of Relativism and the Wider Immanentism.

We faintly hear, we dimly see,
In differing phrase we pray;
But dim or clear, we own in Thee
The Light, the Truth, the Way.

## F. Epilogue

In this last chapter, we have seen that there are many problems associated with our study for which we have no ready solution to offer. But the note of uncertainty is not that on which we would close. Rather, we would recall some of the positive conclusions which we set forth in Chapter xv:—conclusions which, though broad and general rather than detailed or precise, are none the less of far-reaching and profound significance. If we lay them to heart, they will bring to us a

fresh realization of the nearness of God, and of the wonder of God. They will help us to find Him within our own souls, 'closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet'; to recognize Him as 'the immanent Antagonist of evil', both within us and without; to worship Him as the God of Beauty in all Creation; and above all, to love Him as a Person whom we have come to know through Jesus Christ, not as a colourless Abstraction or an indefinable Absolute, but as Father, Saviour and Friend.

It is this thought and experience of God as indwelling Love—or perhaps rather as the indwelling Lover—that points the way towards further reconciliation between the diverse aspects of truth that have confronted us in our study. Even in human life, Love is the greatest of all reconcilers, and guides us into truths deeper than those which our reason can probe. The message of God's indwelling Love lies enshrined in some of the most unforgettable passages of the New Testament:

> God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him.
>
> O Father . . . I made known unto them Thy Name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them.

This same Gospel of God as indwelling Love has found striking expression in the closing words of one of the noblest poems of our own age—Robert Bridges' *The Testament of Beauty*:

> Thus unto all who hav found their high ideal in Christ,
> Christ is to them the essence discern'd or undiscern'd
> of all their human friendships; and each lover of him
> and of his beauty must be as a bud on the Vine
> and hav participation in him; for Goddes love
> is unescapable as nature's environment, . . .
> and in the fellowship of the friendship of Christ
> God is seen as the very self-essence of love,
> Creator and mover of all as activ Lover of all,
> self-express'd in not-self, without which no self were.
> In thought whereof is neither beginning nor end
> nor space, nor time; nor any fault nor gap therein
> 'twixt self and not-self, mind and body, mother and child,
> 'twixt lover and loved, God and man: but ONE ETERNAL
> in the love of Beauty and in the selfhood of Love.

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